



LOU BEZJAK The State

Gray Collegiate boys soccer coach Kevin Heise talks to his team following a loss to T.L. Hanna this week at the Nike Palmetto Cup. Heise and his wife Emily are in their first season as head coaches of the Gray Collegiate soccer programs.

## New school, baby haven't slowed Gray Collegiate's married soccer coaches

BY LOU BEZJAK  
lbezjak@thestate.com

Organizing one of the top high school soccer tournaments at a new venue this year definitely will cause Gray Collegiate boys soccer coach Kevin Heise to lose a little sleep. Add in the fact Heise recently became a father, it makes things even more challenging.

"I'm running on adrenaline right now. It has been a sleepless couple nights," Heise said this week following his team's loss to T.L. Hanna at the Nike Palmetto Cup. "The word amazing gets thrown around a lot, but that is the only way I can describe it."

McCall Mia Heise was born March 28 to Kevin and his wife Emily, who is the Gray Collegiate girls' soccer coach. Less than 36 hours after the birth of his daughter, Kevin Heise was back on the sideline for his team's match against Fox Creek.

Emily Heise has been

away from the sidelines but showed up at a practice with her team before it played in the Nike Palmetto Cup.

"She will be back in the grind before too long," her husband said. "We pumped the brakes a little bit, family comes first and foremost with a new baby. We are trying to get her not to get too worked up."

The birth of their first child was the latest event in a year of transition for the Heises. The couple left Brookland-Cayce in a difficult split after a successful tenure running the Bearcats' soccer program.

Kevin Heise was placed on administrative leave Feb. 10 after a classroom incident. Students and parents rallied to help Heise keep his job, but he eventually resigned April 21. Heise had coached at B-C since 1991, racking up 454 victories, 15 region titles and three lower state crowns.

Emily Heise went with her husband to Gray Collegiate after leading the Bearcats to the Class 3A

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Gray Collegiate boys soccer coach Kevin Heise

championship match. Both were introduced at a news conference May 9 and immediately began putting their stamp on the War Eagles programs.

The two programs have enjoyed success in the Heises' first season at the school. The Gray boys are 17-3, have won the region 3-2A title and are ranked No. 1 in latest Class 2A poll. The GCA girls are 13-4-1 and won their region championship. The third-ranked War Eagle girls made it to the cham-

ampionship game of the Nike Palmetto Cup before losing Providence Athletic Club.

"We want to win now, not five years from now," Heise said. "I can't say enough about the administration to give us the tools to do it. They said you are serious about it and let's get it done. We want to build a first class soccer environment for the soccer players. That is what we are aiming to do. When I wake up, that is my mission."

Heise has high standards for the program both on and off the field and isn't afraid to enforce the rules when he needs to do so. Against T.L. Hanna, he didn't start a couple of his players because they were late when coaches were handing out uniforms.

"A minute late is a minute late," Heise said. "For a lot of the players who have been with me, they know that is going to be the outline. We got their best interest at heart and not just with playing soccer, but developing young men."

Both teams have benefited from an influx of transfers, some of whom played for them at Brookland-Cayce and others who were within the district. On the boys' side, senior Spencer Ayen is playing his senior season at Gray Collegiate after spending the previous season playing academy soccer in Charleston.

Ayen leads the Midlands in scoring with 41 goals and 91 points.

On the girls' side, A.C. Flora transfer Ada Jenkins leads the team with 56 points, followed by former B-C players Catherine McKeown and Kayann Glass.

The teams have played challenging nonregion schedules at a variety of venues. That will help them for the postseason, which begins next month. The Gray boys will play road matches at Furman, Charleston Southern, Newberry, Presbyterian and North Greenville.

"We are playing at seven or eight college campuses, which is unprecedented in high school soccer in our state," Heise said. "So we are emphasizing that. Kids take college courses, get college credit and play on college campuses."

"The best competition we can find is what we want to do. We have an attractive schedule. We are playing anybody and everybody, where it doesn't matter."

## Seven things to know about South Carolina basketball commitment Alanzo Frink

South Carolina on Tuesday evening picked up its second commitment for



Frink also grew up outside

Northeast Conference Player of the Year honors. He played four games this

year. Frink is a native of South Carolina and is currently the level of those schools are gonna be great. But you have to be able to see where you fit

Roselle Catholic coach Dave Boff has sent both Frink and Chris Silva to Frank Martin and the Gamecocks. Silva, a rising senior for USC coming off an All-SEC season, took to Instagram on Tuesday to welcome Frink to Carolina.

Ingrid said of Frank Martin, the son of Cuban immigrants, "so we kind of shared somewhat of the same culture. He has kids, I have kids. We kind of spoke on what our vision was for our kids, our expectations. We were on the same page."