



## ARTS & CULTURE

# First Female Coach Works on the Field in Baseball

April 13, 2022

Alyssa Nakken was working in a training area when the call came: The San Francisco Giants baseball team needed her to **coach** at first base.

Nakken quickly put on her No. 92 team shirt and found a bright orange batting **helmet**. A few minutes later, she made major league history as the first female coach on the field in a regular-season game when she took her place Tuesday night. Her team won with a score of 13-2 over San Diego.

Nakken agreed that being the first female coach “carries a little bit more weight because of the **visibility**,” adding, “But again, this is my job.”

Nakken came in the game to coach first base for the Giants after Antoan Richardson was removed by game officials. Richardson had to leave his position after an exchange of insults with the opposing coach.

### Welcome from the crowd

Nakken received a warm welcome from the crowd when she came in. San Diego player Eric Hosmer shook her hand in congratulations.

Nakken said she has been ready to step in. “I’ve been in training as a first base coach for the last few years and work alongside Antoan, so I stepped into what I’ve been hired to do, [that] is support this staff and this team,” she said.

The baseball Hall of Fame was ready, too. Her helmet is already on its way to the museum in Cooperstown, New York.

San Francisco manager Gabe Kapler said Nakken has been working with Richardson and other coaches. "So, it's not a foreign spot on the field for her. She does so many other things well that aren't seen," he said. "So, it's nice to see her kind of be right there in the **spotlight** and do it on the field."

A softball player in college, Nakken became the first female coach in major league baseball when she was hired by Kapler in January 2020. The 31-year-old Nakken is an assistant coach who works with helping players to improve base running and outfield defense. She watches games from a training area near the **dugout** - an area for team members to sit when they are not on the field. She also keeps a Giants team shirt nearby just in case she needs it.

On Tuesday night, she needed it.

"It's a big deal," she said. "I feel a great sense of responsibility and I feel it's my job to honor those who have helped me to where I am."

Four days earlier, Rachel Balkovec became the first woman to manage a minor league team of a Major League Baseball **club**. She guided the New York Yankees' Class A Tampa to a win in her first game.

I'm Jill Robbins.

*Baseball Writer Janie McCauley reported on this story for the Associated Press. Jill Robbins adapted it for Learning English.*

---

## Words in This Story

**coach** – *v.* to teach someone so they improve at a sport, skill, or in a school subject

**helmet** – *n.* a hard hat that protects your head

**visibility** – *n.* how much someone or something is seen or noticed by other people

(in the) **spotlight** – *phrase.* getting a great deal of attention from others

**dugout** – *n.* a shelter for the members of a team at the side of a sports field

*What do you think of the first female coach on the field in major league baseball? We want to hear from you. Write to us in the Comments Section.*

---