

# US soccer great Morgan bids farewell in final match

AFP – US soccer icon Alex Morgan bade an emotional farewell to football on Sunday as she played the final game of her glittering career before heading into retirement.

The 35-year-old striker announced her decision to hang up her boots on Thursday after revealing she was pregnant with her second child.

She played the first 13 minutes of the San Diego Wave's 4-1 National Women's Soccer League loss to the visiting North Carolina Courage.

"What a ride it has been," Morgan told the cheering crowd after the match.

"I want to thank my teammates who have constantly challenged me every day and made me better.

"There have been so many incredible moments in my career but this last moment I share on the field with you I will cherish forever. So from the bottom of my heart, thank you."

Morgan, who wiped away tears after speaking, thanked her family for support and sacrifice and told her fans: "You pushed me to be my best self every day.

"You pushed me to be the best soccer player, the best mom, the best person I could be just showing up every day and supporting me, encouraging me, challenging me, criticizing me at times.

"I just thank you so much."

The two-time World Cup-winner led San Diego's players onto the field at the Snapdragon Stadium and posed for photos with family and friends before lining up at center-forward.

Fans held up posters with messages of gratitude such as “Thank You Alex”, while other fans and loved ones wore T-shirts with the slogan “SAND13GOAT”, referencing her club and shirt number.

The fairytale farewell didn’t quite follow the script, with Morgan seeing her 10th-minute penalty saved just seconds before San Diego equalized through Kennedy Wesley.

That goal was the cue for Morgan to be substituted in the 13th minute – reflecting her jersey number.

She blew kisses to all corners of the ground and hugged each of her teammates before leaving the field to repeated chants of “Alex Morgan.”

– ‘So many people’ helped –

Speaking before the game to broadcaster CBS, Morgan said she had managed to keep her emotions in check.

“I’m feeling really good, no tears, yet,” she said.

“I’ve been smiling a lot these last few days, because just keeping in the retirement and the pregnancy for so long was just really difficult not to share with people and everything is so much better together.”

Morgan was one of the world’s best-known women’s players during her career, part of a golden generation of American women who blazed a trail for the sport.

She starred in the 2015 and 2019 US Women’s World Cup winning teams, and became known for her work off the field as she pushed for equality in women’s and men’s sports.

Morgan’s 14-year international career saw her score 123 goals, fifth on the US women’s national team all-time list, with 53 assists.

Since scoring her first international goal in 2010 against [China](#), Morgan found the net against 32 nations, scoring the most against [Japan](#) with 12.

Her final game in a US shirt came on June 4 against [South Korea](#) with her last goal coming against [Argentina](#) last February in the Women's Gold Cup.

Morgan played in 22 Women's World Cup matches and scored nine goals while netting six goals in 16 Olympic matches.

Morgan gave birth to her first child, daughter Charlie, in 2020 and became the 14th mom to play for the Americans.

Her club history includes winning a league title with Portland in 2013, and stints with Lyon in 2017 – when she helped the club win the French league, French Cup and UEFA Champions League – and Tottenham in 2020.

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