

# LTCC puts men's soccer coach on paid leave

By Kathryn Reed

Lake Tahoe Community College has placed the men's soccer coach on paid administrative leave.

Ben Wade was escorted off campus on Nov. 5 after a meeting with the director of human resources and dean of students.



Ben Wade

"There is absolutely no cause to let me go at this time in the season," Wade told *Lake Tahoe News*. "I have never seen a coach let go unless he has stolen money from the college or something egregious. I stand by my actions. I've been sorely misrepresented by players I have cut or disciplined. I have not been asked for my side of the story."

LTCC President Kindred Murillo had no comment other than to say, "Nick Arbelaez has been named as the Lake Tahoe Community College head coach." Arbelaez had been the assistant coach for the men's team.

Athletic Director Mike Spina would not comment on the issue and would not say if he had anything to do with the decision.

Wade has five days to respond in writing to the actions taken on Thursday, which he told *Lake Tahoe News* he intends to do. The paid administrative leave is in effect until Nov. 30.

Besides being the coach, Wade is director of Outreach and Equity for LTCC, and teaches music and soccer. The director job has him reaching out to the Hispanic community and international students – two areas of enrollment that have increased since his hire.

Wade said he isn't worried about his future, but he is concerned about that of his players. Last year all the LTCC men's sophomore soccer players were placed at a four-year college. He is no longer in a position to help players on this team with future goals.

He said he received text messages last night from all the players showing support and saying they would be talking to the college administration.

When the South Lake Tahoe two-year college started the soccer program two years ago Wade was recruited because of his ability to put together a winning team as well as his ability to bring students into the program.

This year's team is 12-4-2 overall, and in league is 5-1-1. Two games remain – today at College of the Redwoods and Nov. 13 at home against Shasta College. Playoffs begin Nov. 21. Last year's team was ranked 16th in the nation. Wade is the second winningest coach at any college level.

The displaced coach believes this year's team is a championship team. Wade hasn't given up hope the college will allow him to return as coach and then discuss his employment after the season.