MIRANDA NILD

Miranda Nild had no idea she’d be playing in a World Cup when she scored 31 goals for the Castro Valley High as a sophomore and 38 as a junior. Or even when she scored 13 goals as a junior at the University of California.

But representing Thailand in that prestigious soccer tournament had been made a possibility from the day she was born in Alameda, thanks to her dad, who moved to the U.S. from Thailand at age 10.

“When I was born, my dad knew that he wanted my brother (Wesley) and me to have a passport,” recalled Nild, who was born with the Thai name Suchawadee Nildhamrong. “In (Thai) culture, you have more than just one name.”

Nild was nicknamed “Nong,” which means younger brother or sister. Wesley was called “Nung,” which means (No.) 1.

“My dad spoke Thai around me. We went to Thai temple in Berkeley,” she recalled. “When I got to Thailand, I could understand what they were saying. I was respectful, and because of that, they were a lot more welcoming to me.”

Nild played in the Castro Valley Soccer Club, first on recreational teams and eventually on the highest level travel teams. After being home-schooled for four years, she attended Canyon Middle School for eighth grade and then Castro Valley High.

The Class of 2015 graduate, who had played baseball and basketball as well as soccer as a youth, earned varsity letters in golf, track and soccer. She focused on soccer as a junior and senior.

As Nild grew older, she moved farther back on the soccer field. Once an accomplished scorer, she transitioned to midfield and then to back at Cal, only to find herself at forward again on the Thai team.

Thailand lost all three of its World Cup games last June, but Nild believes the team will be better in Seoul in 2023.

She skipped recent qualifying for the upcoming Olympics -- Thailand did not make it -- because it conflicted with another of her goals: To play American professional soccer. A coveted free agent because she was not drafted last year due to her commitment with the Thai national team, Nild has been working out for National Women’s Soccer League teams.