Gateway soccer star writes new page in the record books

Huntington- Saturday October 14 marked a historic moment for Gateway athletics when Jessica VanHeynigen, who recently became only the second soccer player in Gateway’s history to reach 100 points, broke the school’s scoring record.

Senior Jessica VanHeynigen scored Gateway’s lone goal in a win versus Easthampton, which brought her point total to 105. The previous record was 104 points, set by Jessica Rida in 2002. As VanHeynigen approached the goal, Gateway fans held their breath in anticipation. A smooth pass from Ava Auclair made its way over to VanHeynigen, who finished the play with a beautiful goal just under the crossbar.

Teammates crowded around VanHeynigen as they realized what that goal meant. Play was stopped, and both teams went to their respective benches. Gateway’s Athletic Director and assistant coach Matthew Bonenfant made his way up to the announcer’s booth for the ceremony, with teammate Ava Auclair and assistant coach Sam Belardo in tow.

Previous record holder Jessica Rida was present for the ceremony, handing the game ball over to new record holder VanHeynigen. As Coach Bonenfant spoke of the amazing feat of both Rida and VanHeynigen, Ava Auclair and Sam Belardo unveiled a new banner which holds the names of Gateway’s two 100 point scorers in gold letters. The banner was a surprise to both Rida and VanHeynigen, and both were all smiles as they looked up at the banner. Coach Estelle then gave a speech about the pleasure of coaching both VanHeynigen and Rida.

The game continued and was hard-fought by both teams, with the lone goal standing as the game winner. VanHeynigen’s record breaking goal helped bring the Gators a win, qualifying the team for post season tournament. VanHeynigen was also named the Masslive Athlete of the Week last week.

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Photo: Former record holder Jessica Rida with new record holder Jessica VanHeynigen at Saturday’s soccer game where VanHeynigen scored her 105th goal. The women were surprised with the new banner, honoring both of them, at Saturday’s game!