Accolades keep coming for Gateway’s VanHeynigen

**Huntington** – Jessica VanHeynigen, Gateway’s senior striker who set a new scoring record for the school in her senior year, earned another accolade this month when the MIAA (Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association) named her the female Athlete of the Month for November, out of all athletes in the state.

In announcing the award to staff and students, Athletic Director Matt Bonenfant stated, “This is a statewide award and is received for on-field excellence, academic achievement, sportsmanship and community service. There are only eight female athletes who will be honored with this award throughout the school year, so this is a very special honor considering there are over one hundred thousand female student-athletes statewide.”

In their award announcement, the MIAA stated the following. “Jessica is a five-year member of the girls’ varsity soccer team at Gateway Regional High School, serving the last two years as a captain. She is the second student-athlete in school history to record 100 points on the soccer field and is currently the all-time leading point scorer in school history. Jessica is also a four-time all-league recipient as voted by the league coaches. She is known for her leadership and sportsmanship, consistently contacting rival players to congratulate them on post-season awards and college commitments.

Academically, Jessica is ranked in the top two of the senior class at Gateway Regional High School. She has qualified for the Honor Roll in all 13 quarters that she has been eligible. Jessica is the Senior Class President and a four-year member of the Student Council, currently serving as Treasurer. In addition, Jessica was elected into the National Honor Society.

Jessica excels outside of the classroom and soccer field through numerous service and volunteer work. She currently serves as an MIAA Student Ambassador and will attend MIAA Educational Athletics events throughout the year in this leadership role. She coaches youth soccer as well and has organized rides for middle school girls who wanted to try out for the high school team but do not have transportation. Furthermore, Jessica organized a hat and mitten drive with her teammates for local residents in need.”

VanHeynigen is the first Gateway student ever named an MIAA athlete of the month. She now holds the all-time school scoring record of 108.

The Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA) Student-Athlete of the Month Award is presented on a monthly basis to one male and one female student-athlete who display excellence in the areas of academics, athletics and community service. Students in grades 9-12 who attend MIAA
member schools are eligible to receive the award. Monthly award recipients receive a certificate of recognition, are featured on www.miaa.net and are honored at the MIAA Awards Recognition Banquet in the spring. Nominations for the award may be submitted by principals, athletic directors, teachers, coaches, guidance counselors or other school administrators. For additional information about the MIAA Student-Athlete of the Month Award program please visit www.miaa.net.

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Photo: Jess VanHeynigen’s family surprised her with the balloons when she broke the 100 points level earlier last fall.