

Pawloski gets player of year

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POST-DISPATCH

06/14/2009



Althoff's Megan Pawloski (left).
(Photo by John Swistak Jr.)

One look at the numbers — 43 goals, 19 assists this season and 102 goals and 39 assists in her career — and it becomes evident why Althoff junior and St. Louis Scott Gallagher player Megan Pawloski was nominated for Post-Dispatch Soccer Player of the Year.

Watch her in a game and one quickly realizes why she beat out a handful of other top area players to secure the honor.

"Megan is a special player," Althoff coach Juergen Huettner said. "She's everything you look for in a striker. She has great speed and skills and she has a tremendous understanding of the game. But the thing I love most about Megan's game is her work rate.

"From the start of the game until the end, she's in constant motion, working to get open and to create scoring chances. She always plays at top speed and with a great deal of intensity and heart."

A two-time All-Metro selection, Pawloski has been a starter since day one at Althoff. After a 22-goal, 5-assist freshman season, she led the area in scoring a year ago, finishing with 37 goals and 15 assists. The Crusaders (25-4-1) became the only girls' squad from the area to reach the Class AA title match, falling 3-0 to Waubonsie Valley.

With Illinois going to three classifications this year, Althoff became an early favorite in Class 2A. But the Crusaders (23-3-1) were upended by Chatham-Glenwood in a wild 4-3 supersectional match at the University of Illinois at Springfield.

"It was definitely one of the stranger games of my high school career," said Pawloski, 17. "It was just one of those back-and-forth games that we never could seem to get control of. It was a tough loss for us, especially after getting to state last year, but (Glenwood) did what they needed to do, I guess.

"I feel bad for our seniors, but for the rest of us, hopefully that loss is something that will motivate us even more next year."

For Pawloski, it is all about team and reaching her ultimate goal: a state championship.

"When I play, my No. 1 goal is to do whatever I can to help my team win and I'd gladly trade my goals and assists if it meant getting to Chicago and winning the state title," the area's 2009 scoring leader said. "I'm proud of what I've been able to accomplish, but I know that my success is due to the great players around me. My teammates have helped make me a better player and hopefully they'd say the same thing about me."

Added Huettnner: "Megan is a very humble person and that goes a long way with her teammates."

Pawloski, who excels at the flip throw-in, has given an oral commitment to play at the University of Illinois.

"I know I have some work to do," Pawloski said. "I definitely have to be stronger to play Big 10 soccer. But that's something I plan to focus on during my senior year."