

She shoots, she soars! GI's Pezzino sets state goal-scoring record



Grand Island's Madisyn Pezzino celebrates as she breaks the New York State goal-scoring record during second-half action against Lockport. (Harry Scull Jr./Buffalo News)

By [Miguel Rodriguez](#) Published October 11, 2016 Updated 12:28 a.m.

The best goal scorer in the history of Grand Island girls' soccer is now the greatest finisher in the history of New York State.

Madisyn Pezzino did it. The sixth-year Vikings star became the state's all-time leader in goals during Grand Island's 8-0 victory over Lockport on Tuesday night at Gene Masters Field.

Pezzino came into the Niagara Frontier League clash needing three goals to break the state mark set by former City Honors star Molly Petrucci. Pezzino deposited five, as the state record now stands at 237 goals and counting with the Vikings still having one regular season game left on its schedule and the postseason.

"It's definitely an amazing feeling," said Pezzino, who will play collegiately at Division I power Florida State. "I couldn't have done it without my amazing teammates behind me." Pezzino tied the record just 20 seconds into the second half with a shot into the top half of the net. She broke it with 5 minutes, 32 seconds later and added to it after a brief ceremony honoring the feat in which she was given the milestone ball and a commemorative plaque.

She'll always remember the record breaker, and not just because her favorite teammate Marcy Barberic earned the assist. "Putting the ball in the back of the net and having all my teammates dogpile on top of me was an unbelievable feeling because I couldn't have done it without them," said Pezzino who has scored 29 goals the past five games.

After opening the scoring with a sensational drive-and-shoot through multiple defenders, she misfired on a few quality chances during the remainder of a first half in which she also picked up an assist for a Vikings crew that led 3-0 at the break. There's no reason for the more than 400 fans in attendance to fear, however, as Pezzino did what she's done best throughout her career during the opening six minutes of the second half. She finished, early and often.

The record-breaking marker was a goal scorer's goal. She received a pass from longtime teammate and fellow captain Barberic inside the 15-yard line and drilled a low shot into the net off the far right post. Twenty-nine seconds later, she scored again – her fourth of the night – to make it 6-0 Vikings.



Pezzino meets up with teammate Marcy Barberic, who assisted on the record-setting goal. (Harry Scull Jr./Buffalo News)

With students chanting “Maddie, Maddie” and conducting a brief goal-count chant of “one, two, three, four, we want five,” she gave them what they wanted roughly seven minutes later, pouncing on the rebound of a Barberic shot and booting it calmly into the open net.

Pezzino now has 58 goals this season but she's been a scoring machine the past five games. Over that period, she's had two seven-goal efforts, a six-goal contest, a four-goal one and Tuesday's special effort. Grand Island's philosophy during longtime coach Dave Bowman's tenure has been to take a team first approach but with Pezzino having a legitimate chance at the record he had to wrestle with his own beliefs. The Vikings may beat teams by a lot but they don't purposely try to run up the score.

“We wanted to be sportsmanlike but I think she did it with class,” Bowman said. “Everyone I talked to said if you have a girl with this opportunity let her go for it.” The Vikings did just that. “I wanted the record very badly,” Pezzino said. “I worked very hard throughout the season to reach that goal. I'm very happy I was able to break it.”

There's something else Pezzino and her teammates want even more: a Section VI championship. That is the next objective on the team's agenda, with Section VI playoff seeds to be announced Saturday. It won't be easy what with defending champion and longtime nemesis Williamsville East expected to be in the same playoff bracket as Grand Island.

But Tuesday was a night for celebrating. In addition to being the team's Senior Night, it was an evening for the books. “It's exciting and ... the best thing about it is there have been a lot of girls who have been part of this record,” Bowman said. “There have been a lot of girls in the past who were part of this. To the program, it's a great accolade. ... She's just as excited to see her teammates score as she is putting the ball in the net. To watch her do something like this ...”

Is simply amazing.