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Wednesday, 28 December 2011 18:16

Ozaukee High to retire jersey of record-breaking international soccer star

Ozaukee High School graduate Ashley Bares has made a name for herself as a soccer player at the collegiate level and in Europe.

Now, members of the Northern Ozaukee School Board have agreed that it is about time Bares is shown a little hometown appreciation.

The board unanimously approved the recommendation of varsity soccer coach Eric Liebergen that Bares' No. 2 jersey be retired as a tribute to her on-field accomplishments and her commitment to the local soccer program.

ASHLEY BARES WAS a force to reckon with while playing soccer for Ozaukee High School. As a tribute to her success on the field and beyond, her soccer jersey will be retired in a March ceremony. Press file photo

The 5-foot-8 Bares completed her career with the Ozaukee Warriors' soccer team in 2007 as Wisconsin's all-time scoring leader. She tallied 224 career goals, eighth all-time nationally.

Bares earned considerable attention on the soccer scene as a high-school sophomore, when she tallied 69 goals, a total she matched again during her senior season. The goal output stands as the state single-season scoring record.

Named four times to the all-conference team in the Central Lakeshore Conference, Bares was selected three times as an all-state player.

More importantly, she helped lead the Warriors to four straight WIAA state tournament appearances, including back-to-back state titles in 2005 and 2006. Bares also set the state tournament scoring record.

Bares continued her winning ways in soccer at Marquette University in Milwaukee, where she wrapped up a four-year career by being named a member of the all-Big East Conference first team in 2010.

Bares was captain of the Golden Eagles team her senior year.

Earlier this year, she took her game overseas, playing for the professional team UMF Stjarnan in Iceland.

Again, Bares excelled, leading her team to its first league championship. The win qualifies the team to compete in the UEFA Women's Championship League next season.

During her first pro season, Bares tallied 21 goals in 18 matches, earning the Golden Boot as the league's leading scorer. She was also named most valuable player.

Bares was named the best foreign-born player in all of women's international soccer.

Liebergen said her soccer prowess only tells half the story, making a community recognition appropriate.

"She has done so much, bringing visibility to our program and to our school. Ashley still visits our school and helps at camps whenever she can, so I thought it was time to recognize her for all she has done," he told the School Board.

"When she lists her biographical information, Ashley still says she is from Ozaukee High first, and lists Marquette second."

Although girls soccer is a spring sport, Liebergen said a ceremony marking the retirement of the jersey will be held during the basketball season because Bares is expected to return to Europe in March to resume her professional career.

The jersey retirement ceremony will be held at halftime of the March 1 varsity girls' basketball game against the Random Lake Rams.

After talking with Bares, assistant coach Alex Schroeder said she is excited about the prospect of having her number retired.

Liebergen was not surprised by the reaction, noting Bares' drive to succeed.

“Ashley would not accept mediocrity and she never settled for just being good. She set her sights on being the best,” her coach said.

“She would set her sights on what people would say is impossible and she would set out to prove them wrong. We had some very talented teams while Ashley was here — her sister Brittany, Abbie Kaul, Brittanie Paulus, Mindy Donald, Nicole Bundy, Kayla Bares and Kaityln Thill —, and Ashley’s attitude of commitment and excellence spread throughout so many of those players.”

Bares’ jersey will be displayed in the school’s trophy case, much like the football jersey of Ozaukee High grad Mitch Jacoby, who graduated from Northern Illinois University and played three seasons as a tight end in the National Football League.