

Jozef's stop, Sparacio key Wheatley title

BY OWEN O'BRIEN
owen.o'brien@newsday.com

All Cecilia Jozef could think was: "Don't let it in, please."

With Wheatley holding a one-goal lead early in the second half, the senior goalkeeper stared down a breakaway, doing her best to remain composed. Understanding this play could decide the fate of a championship, Jozef trusted her instincts and made the stop to help Wheatley to a 2-0 win over Mattituck/Southold/Greenport in the Long Island Class B girls soccer championship/Southeast regional final Saturday afternoon at Islip High School.

"I was just thinking to step toward her ankle and dive toward the way she turned so I can keep my team in the game," said Jozef, who had two saves as she wasn't tested often thanks to a solid backline.

Wheatley (5-4-2) advances to its second state Class B semifinal in the last three seasons, and will

face the winner of Bronxville/Chenango Forks Saturday at 10 a.m. at Cortland High School. Mattituck/Southold/Greenport finished at 9-9.

On a windy Saturday afternoon, Rebecca Sparacio put the Wildcats on the scoreboard first with a goal off a cross from Isa Rios with 1:48 left in the opening half.

"It was a dream come true," Sparacio said. "I just wanted to do it for my team because I was so proud to be a part of it."

"I got the ball and I turned and everyone was telling me to shoot, so I just played it right to the corner and fingers crossed, it went in," she added. "It was incredible."

After Jozef's breakaway save less than three minutes into the second half, Rios went on her own breakaway five minutes later, beating the goalkeeper before a combination of the wind and the defense of Saira Bachez cleared the ball of the goaline.

CLASS B FINAL



WHEATLEY MATT-SOUTH-GREEN

Wheatley 11-2
Mattituck / Greenport / Southold 00-0
Goals - WHE: Rios, Sparacio; Assists - WHE: Rios; Saves - WHE: Jozef 2; MGS: Santacroce 6, Woreysz 2;

But Rios had another opportunity with another breakaway off a pass from Sparacio. She scored off her own rebound with 14:59 left to give Wheatley a 2-0 lead.

"I was just thinking, 'Go to goal, I had to get it in,'" Rios said. "It's a crazy memory to have."

The Wheatley backline, featuring Samantha Rothstein, Katharine Gold, Julia Braitto and Kaitlin Schriefer, played a strong game to limit Mattituck/Southold/Greenport's scoring chances.

"We had to keep the pressure and we had to want it," coach Michelle Santoro said. "Because the wind was kind of like a third team on the field."

But the Wildcats aren't done yet, looking to prove themselves in Cortland.

"This is what we've been working toward for 12 weeks," Sparacio said. "Our motto is, 'All in.' We just wanted to do this for each other. We know we're good enough to get there and it's been our goal and it's crazy we were able to achieve that."



Wheatley goalkeeper Cecilia Jozef made a big save in Long Island Class B final.

GEORGE A. FAELLA

VSS BELIEVES &

Will to succeed helps No. 18 seed capture crown

BY OWEN O'BRIEN
owen.o'brien@newsday.com

The Valley Stream South girls soccer team had a clear, unified mantra entering the season.

"The message has been all season, 'Don't let anybody write your story for you. Don't let anybody tell you what you can do, can't do, capable of,'" coach Demetri Adrahtas said.

It's a message the players took to heart, and have bonded over. When they dance and hug after victories, it's about enjoying the moment together. A moment that was unexpected by many when the season began, but became a clear reality as the season went on.

After becoming the lowest seed (No. 18) to win a county title in Nassau girls athletics history, the Falcons celebrated their first trip to the state semifinals after defeating Islip, 1-0, in the girls soccer Long Island Class A championship/Southeast regional final Saturday evening at Islip High School.

Valley Stream South (19-0) advances to play Vestal in the state Class A semifinal Saturday at 3 p.m. at Tompkins Cortland Community College.

"We are definitely trying to prove that we are all we have, but that's all we need," said sophomore midfielder Mia Asenjo. "We don't need anybody else. We don't need all these other people because we know in our hearts that we have this and these teams are not expecting anything."

Asenjo, who scored twice in the Nassau Class A championship, continued her impressive season with the game's lone goal, striking from about 30 yards out to the top-left corner of the net off a touch pass from Yasmin Voytelmgum with 23:55 left in the second half.

"Throughout the game in my head, I just said 'Keep taking shots, keep taking shots. It's coming,'" Asenjo said. "And then I said 'This is the one,' and I shot it and it just went in."

And even though the Falcons pictured themselves playing — and winning — a Long Island



Mia Asenjo said Falcons set sights on

CLASS A FINAL



VALLEY STREAM S. ISLIP

Valley Stream South 01-1
Islip 00-0
Goals - VSS: Asenjo; Assists - VSS: Voytelmgum; Saves - VSS: Peralta 3; I: Scheidel 6.

title from their first fall meeting, the moment still surpassed their expectations.

"It's something we had in mind," said forward Bryana Pizarro. "But being on the field, it's something different. It's an even better feeling."