

Huron Varsity Womens Soccer: on to the regional finals!

By Julie Heng

On Tuesday evening, the Huron Women's Varsity Soccer Team defeated Woodhaven 3-1. They are now headed to the regional finals for the first time since 2009.

The bus to Woodhaven hummed with excitement. Some of the girls were answering questions about Ricky Martin in Spanish, some were signing yearbooks, some were getting in a few final precious minutes of rest. There was laughing, screaming, eating uncrustables, and everything in between. A quick black to white uniform change on the bus and the girls were ready to go.

The Rats quickly scored two goals in the first half: first, junior Jady Smith; then, senior Autumn Halliwell, who rolled past a defender and poked the ball in the bottom corner of the net. By halftime, the team was dancing to Michael Jackson as the Woodhaven coaches struggled to keep it together. In the second half, junior Siena Smith scored a third goal on a rebounded attempt. Highlights included an incredible combination play between freshman Jessica Tai and senior Ayaka Inoki where Inoki's shot hit the crossbar and nearly went in.

"It's a surreal feeling," coach Lee Hudson said. "I think everyone in the high school world had us going out against Saline in the district semifinals but now here we are in the regional finals and one of the top eight teams in the state at D1. I'm in a state of shock if I'm honest because we keep coming up with big wins when we need to. The girls are outstanding and are playing the best soccer of their lives right now."

Co-captain Inoki knew Huron had a strong team this year.

"We're stacked with strong players in every part of the field," Inoki said. "I knew the hardest path getting there [was] having to beat Pioneer, Saline, and Skyline, and we did it, and it feels amazing. I'm so proud of the team, and I can't wait to keep our streak going."

CAPTIONS:

Captain Minna Tremonti celebrates with the team after winning 3-1 against Woodhaven High School.

The team has a 9-3-1 record this season. The last time Huron won the state championship was 2008 under coach Todd Pfeiffer. Photo by Julie Heng.

With the momentum of being in the lead, senior midfielder Ayaka Inoki passes the ball to a forward. “My favorite moment of the game was when we switched from playing a direct kick-and-chase style to our connected style. It’s one thing to master a certain way to playing as a team but it’s another story to switch between two styles on command [nonverbally], and I think we did it beautifully.” Photo by Julie Heng.