

Byron, Carlson, Petri & Kalb Female Athlete Of The Month: Natalie Beck Leads Griffins Girls Soccer In Scoring

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GLEN CARBON - Natalie Beck was one of the key seniors on the Father McGivney Catholic girls soccer team that won the IHSA Class 1A state championship on June 6, 2026, over Pleasant Plains 3-0 at North Central College in Naperville, in far west suburban Chicago, and was also one of the St. Louis area's leading scorers this season in helping the Griffins to the championship.

Beck has been an outstanding athlete for McGivney over the years, playing on championship basketball teams and being a state tennis qualifier for four years.

Beck led the Griffins with 38 goals and 27 assists for 104 points, and had five game-winning goals during the season. She scored her final goal of her high school career on a penalty kick in the first half to give McGivney a 2-0 lead over the Cardinals en route to the final win.

In an interview conducted after a reception at the Griffins home gym on June 8, 2026, to welcome the team home, and honor them for the title. Beck described the final scenes as somewhat surreal.

"It doesn't even feel real," Beck said with a smile. "I thought like I was dreaming, but we all just ran into each other's arms, and it kind of hit me."

The win over Pleasant Plains in the final climaxed a long journey in which the Griffins and their players had long worked very hard for - a well-deserved state championship for themselves and the entire athletic program.

"It's really cool," Beck said, "but it wouldn't be possible without all the coaches before us, and all the other girls. This team is only nine years old, and so, to think we just won a championship in nine years, it's a credit to everybody who came before us."

Beck felt the biggest key to the team this season was their resilience and being able to overcome adversity from the past to keep striving and take home the title to the St. Louis area.

"I think kind of having it ripped from us the past two seasons," Beck said, "a little bit during our freshman year, we just came back and felt that this was the year to do it. So we were just all hungry for it."

Dominating an undefeated team in Pleasant Plains, in which the Cardinals were limited to one shot on goal the entire match, was also a wonderful feeling for the Griffins and their defense.

"We have so many playmakers on this team" Beck said. "We just know that our bench is stacked, everybody on the field can play anywhere, and they're going to give 110 percent."

Beck is now headed to Arkansas State University in Jonesboro, Ark., and leaves to join the team on June 26, 2026.

She hopes to have success down for the Red Wolves, and will also carry precious memories of the championship with her. Her favorite memory, besides winning the state title, would be the Griffins winning over 2025 champion Columbia 6-0 in the sectional final at Columbia.

"I feel like every day was just like a different memory," Beck said of the 2026 season. "But one of the biggest moments probably was when we beat Columbia. Everybody was just really happy, it was fun to just see us work so hard to get the win."