

# With swish of free throw, Sheraka tops Roxana's all-time scoring mark

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For years outside her home in Roxana, anyone listening could hear the thud of a ball hitting the backboard, rim and swishing through the net as Maddy Sheraka has tried to perfect her shot.

On Thursday night in front of an enthusiastic Roxana High School crowd, Sheraka let the most meaningful free-throw shot of her four-year career roll off her fingertips through the basket. With the free throw, she broke an all-time scoring record of 1,286 by

Angie Payne, set in 1996. Sheraka scored 17 points in Roxana's victory over East Alton-Wood River to push her to 1,301 points in her Lady Shells' career.

After she tossed the free throw in the bucket, the game was stopped and Roxana fans rose to their feet in a large-scale salute to the Lady Shells star. Her teammates joined her near the free-throw line, congratulated her and as she has done so often, she quietly went back to work to lead Roxana to the win on Senior Night.

"The record was something I wanted to do," she said. "I thought about it last year and I knew it was within my reach. That was awesome when the crowd stood up for me. I have never felt like that before. I don't know if I even know how to describe it."

When asked what the key was to making all those shots, she said, "I guess making sure it rolls off the point of the fingers is pretty important. My dad and a lot of my former coaches were always on me to perfect the shot and I spent a lot of time in my childhood out in the driveway, just shooting."

Sheraka is also a straight-A student and an exceptional volleyball player.

She said she started playing basketball in third grade and instantly fell in love with it. She was projected to be 6-foot-2 in her younger years, so it seemed a natural fit. Today, she stands 5-foot-8 and said she would love to be 6-foot-2, but she makes the absolute most with her size.

The Roxana standout hasn't made a decision on which college she will attend. She said some schools have shown interest in her to play basketball.

"I am one of those people who like to have a plan so it is kind of eating away at me," she said of not making that decision yet. She said after the basketball season ends, she will formulate a plan for college.

One of the first to congratulate Sheraka on Thursday night was her teammate Hannah Rexford, a 5-foot-8 freshman. "I am good friends with Hannah and her sister, Elizabeth, who is a senior," Sheraka said. "It meant a lot when she reached out to me."

Sheraka has tried to inspire the younger kids by doing bigger and better things with her actions on the court and keeping a positive attitude.

"I definitely like it when the little kids say they want to be like me," she said.

Tammy Talbert, the Roxana head girls' coach, described Sheraka as a "pure shooter."

“She has gotten a lot better about finding a basket off the dribble and has had a lot of points like that,” she said. “During her sophomore year, she was used as more of an outside shooter. I would say she is more well-rounded now, able to score inside and out.”

Talbert said Sheraka is one of those players who don’t come around often in the career of a coach.

She is pretty quiet actually, but leads by example,” the coach said. “The younger kids look up to her and a couple may even think about chasing her scoring record. She is a quality girl on and off the court.”







