The way newly crowned NABF atomweight (102 pound) female champion Suszannah “Destiny” Warner sees it, destiny played as much of a part in her success in the ring as her tremendous athletic abilities did.

For 30 of her 36 years she played soccer, first in her native England, and later in the New York Women’s League where she excelled as a striker and goal scorer on the Barnstonworth Rovers.

After tearing up her ACL (knee) in the last ten minutes of the season a few years back, she was forced to have surgery. During the extensive and exhaustive physical therapy that followed, she joined the Equinox Gym. It was there that she observed a white-collar boxing class going on.

Thinking that learning the rudiments of boxing would be easy on her newly constructed knee, she began taking classes with onetime junior middleweight prospect Curtis Summit.

She proved to be as natural a boxer as she was a soccer player. Just two and a half months after she began training, Warner was competing in the 2003 New York City Golden Gloves 106-pound finals at Madison Square Garden.

Although she lost a decision that year, she won the coveted tournament in 2004. Her life has been lived on automatic pilot ever since.

“Everything just escalated out of control after that,” said the Manhattan-based Warner, who is employed as a researcher at Baruch College.

Warner went on to win the national tournament in Colorado Springs in 2005. Although her amateur career consisted of only about ten fights, it was after that victory that she realized she was destined to fight professionally.

“People thought I was crazy,” said the always smiling and seemingly eternally optimistic Warner. “But that’s the type of person I am. I had to give it a good go. I’m glad I did.”

Warner turned pro in September 2005, scoring a first round knockout over Doreen Hilton in Denver. Since then she has fought again in Colorado, as well as in New Mexico, Idaho, California, New Jersey, and New York.

She lost three decisions on the road, but also beat Noriko Kariya, who was 3-0, in May 2006 in Atlantic City. She won her current title from the much more experienced Yvonne Caples, now 7-11-2 (1 KO), at the Paradise Theater in the Bronx, New York, on December 8.

After beating Caples, who had been more than competitive traversing the globe to fight such notables as Elena Reid (twice), Regina Halmich, Carina Marino, In Young Lee, and Yuko Sodeoka, by eight round decision, Warner, who is now trained by both Hector Roca and Luigi

Olcese, improved her record to 6-3 (1 KO).

“I can’t believe that I’m here,” said Warner. “It is very surreal to me at times. I’m surprised how quickly everything has happened, hence my nickname of Destiny. I wanted to put on a good performance and make my trainers and manager proud.”

Warner’s new manager, Allison Emmert, who is in the finance industry, couldn’t have been prouder. After Warner’s crowd-pleasing performance over Caples, Emmert was wearing a mega-watt smile that looked like it would never go away.

With no experience in boxing, and Warner the first fighter under her managerial care, Emmert admits that the boxing business, which by its nature is devoid of anything resembling fair play, had been a bit daunting for her at first.

But it is obvious that Emmert is nobody’s fool. Nor does she give the impression that she would allow anyone to run roughshod over her. From all appearances she is willing to play fairly and by the rules. However, you can’t help but detect a fighting spirit within her that will rear its head if anyone tries to take advantage of her.

“It was a bumpy journey to this bout,” said Emmert. “The future should be very interesting.”

One thing is for certain: Warner and Emmert appear to be kindred spirits who feed off of each other’s positive energy. Both welcome significant challenges, either in the game of life or the sport of boxing.

“It’s funny,” said Warner, “but back in 1992, when I first came to the United States, boxing wasn’t even on my radar. I had gone to a few training sessions, but was too involved in soccer to take it seriously. It really hit home, though, in 2003.”

In one way or another, Warner has been leaving indelible positive impressions everywhere she has been. When she first came to America, she taught sports to impoverished inner city children at summer camps in Detroit, Massachusetts and upstate New York.

She says that she found that job very rewarding, and it is hard to fathom, given her infectious personality, that the beneficiaries of her efforts weren’t equally affected by her efforts on their behalf.

Later, for about five years, she worked for the International Commission for Insurance for Holocaust Survivors, a job of equal social importance as being a mentor to youths at risk.

Warner has been making a difference for her whole life, so there is no reason to think she won’t continue to do so as a champion.

She says that she is learning to get tougher when dealing with the business aspects of boxing where she says, “People in the back scenes might not be as honest as you want them to be.”

Warner, who seems as honest as an athlete and a person as the day is long, is not naïve. She, as well as her manager, realizes that female boxing is still desperately in need of mainstream respectability.

Maybe, just maybe, these two women, both of whom are so accomplished in their own right, can help bring about a difference that will benefit women boxers throughout the world.

“Right now most women boxers are all equally as good as each other,” said Warner. “The sport is still looking for a star. There are so many good fighters out there, and all they need is a chance to show what they can do. I think that if we all work together, we can be even better than we are now.”

Jill Diamond, the head of the NABF female division, couldn’t agree more. “What makes these women so special is the fact that it is so hard for them to succeed,” she said. “They fight for such little money and prestige, but in terms of desire and talent they have as much, if not more, than their male counterparts. It’s up to promoters to make them promotable. Some promoters stepped up, but there is still a long way to go.”

If Warner can be part of a much bigger movement, she would be thrilled. “I want to go out and win titles in various weight classes and make my mark,” she said. “I want people to be inspired by the fact that I went out and followed my dreams, even if they came later in life.

“I would love for people to say she went out and did it at the age of 33,” she continued. “The lesson is that you should never give up on your dreams. Not at 20. Not at 30 or 40. Not ever.”