

Women's hockey unbeaten through five games

Defense holds in sudden death to force tie with Yale

by Sid Barrett Aspbury III

It was a cold and blustery Saturday afternoon. The cool Vermont air swept across the campus like it was an arctic tundra. There was a feeling of non-existence among the trees, and the sky spoke words heard only by the squirrels and transient passer-bys. But in the Nelson Arena a whole different life was being explored and exploited. Middlebury's women's hockey team was handing Williams a beating for the second time this season.

Before winter break, the Panthers posted wins against Williams, UVM, and Hamilton by scores of 4-0, 4-1, and 4-3 respectively. Their previous games showed strong leadership from the defense and assertive power from the offense. The younger players on the team also pulled together, indeed, almost carried the team in many scoring situations. Over break, the players were treated to a much needed rest with no official competition. Yet, there seemed to be no ill effects on the players' performances when Saturday strolled around.

The Middlebury icewomen gave Williams a veritable whoopin', leaving the Cows on the short end of a 7-1 score. Eight minutes into the game,

senior co-captain Margi Sheehan opened the scoring by beating the Williams defense with an unassisted goal. Two more goals came from junior Laurie Odden and sophomore Liz Fitzgerald before the close of the first period.

Shortly after the Zamboni exited the rink, Middlebury again asserted their dominance. Scoring back to back goals were first year student Kelly Hefner, off a rebound with 13:51 left, and Fitzgerald one minute later, with a wrist shot from the left side of the goal.

After the Zamboni had conquered the ice for a second time, the team did the same. Williams hopes were briefly inflated by a kicked in goal, but the officials ruled it out. Then, with 13:03 left and a Middlebury player in the penalty box, senior co-captain Margaret Heald scored with an upper left-hand corner wrist shot.

At last, Williams scored with 8:56 left, but they were rebutted with a yet another goal. Laura Cowperthwait '94 received a pass from Odden and netted the puck with 7:08 left. With this last goal, Middlebury peppered the tongues of the Williams team in a bad tasting 7-1, defeat, and improved their record to 4-0-0.

The game was characterized by excellent passing and clearing on the part of Middlebury. It seemed as if Odden, with fabulous stick work, could take the puck anywhere she wished. Williams' lack of communication was evident throughout, and reflected in the disparity in the color of their helmets. Despite a few swarthy, gin-soaked Williams fans, who encouraged their players to stay "bloodthirsty," the Ephwomen with their cud-chewing mascot remained stagnant in their efforts to capitalize on the few mistakes made by the Panthers. Sunday's game proved more challenging as Middlebury did battle against the Yale Bulldogs.

The grey noon sky of the next day was reflected inside Nelson Arena by an anti-climactic outcome, which ended in 1-1 draw. The game proved to be one of aggressive play and a lack of officiating.

In light of their heated rivalry, Middlebury faced off against Yale anticipating a close game. The intensity of the competition was indicated by Coach Bill Mandigo's decision to play only the first two lines.

The fast paced first period showcased the Panthers' tenacious man down defense after Laura Cowperthwait '94

was put in the box for interference. However, she came out strong and soon after scored the first and only goal for Middlebury with assists from behind the cage by Odden and Hefner at 9:55.

The second period continued with the same quick tempo, but no goals were scored despite several shots on Yale's goalie and co-captain, Maureen Magauran, who turned away 28 shots in the game.

In the third period, Yale's play was more aggressive, and perhaps a little sloppy. But when Fitzgerald was penalized for hooking, Yale was provided a chance to score the tying goal with 4:55 left to play in regulation on a shot that deflected off a Middlebury player's skate.

In sudden death overtime, both teams were held at bay thanks to the brilliant goalkeeping of Liza Baxter '94, who had 20 saves for the game including a huge one with :01 left in the extra time. Despite the tie, Middlebury was satisfied with their performance against a highly rated Yale team.

The team's record is now 4-0-1, but this weekend the Panthers travel to go up against the likes of M.I.T. and nationally-ranked Brown, where they should make a strong showing.

Haverford win ends hoops' seven game skid