

Women's hockey drops tournament

By Rob Merrill

While many of us were getting a tan or slaving over our theses during February break, the Middlebury women's hockey team took to the ice for a total of six games.

They posted a record of 2-4, with victories versus Wesleyan and Bowdoin and losses against Providence, Dartmouth, Boston College and Bowdoin. It was the most inconsistent sequence of games this team has yet endured, but coaches and players remain optimistic as the season winds down.

ter Carnival

course and all of them fared poorly in the giant slalom.

Likewise, the men's nordic team has been so far unable to gel as a team. Excluding Zach Caldwell '94, Aldrich is perplexed by the lack of individual consistency. Even so, he is not overly concerned. In his opinion the team will soon peak, with each skier performing at their best at the same time. Jay Leach '97, Ryan Brooks '96 and Ryder Clifford '94 have all had great races this season, but not at the same time. The men's training regime should allow the skiers to reach peak performance levels in the upcoming carnivals.

Co-captain Matt Waddell expressed the prevailing sentiment on the men's team: "We've been training extremely hard all season and we've just run into some bad luck. Although it is a bit disappointing, we are not dwelling on the past. I know we have it in us to challenge UVM and Dartmouth, especially when Nate [Bryan] returns, and we are hoping that Williams will be the turning point where everything clicks together."

Only two carnivals remain on the schedule. If all the skiers compete as they have at some point this season, the Panthers will reap their just reward — a complete victory over nemesis UVM. The women are eager to repeat their feat and the men are happy to try and join the club.

Women's Hockey	
Middlebury	3
Bowdoin	5

After being shut out by Division I Providence College 6-0 on Feb. 3, the Panthers rode north to play in the Bowdoin Invitational. Their opening round game pitted them against the hosting Polar Bears. In what must be termed a true rinkburner, first-year forward Jen Hefner netted her second goal of the game with 17 seconds remaining to give the team a 3-2 win.

The tournament finale certainly did not lessen the excitement. After four overtime periods and a combined 80 minutes of leg-wearying hockey, Middlebury lost a grudge match to the Boston College Eagles 4-3. A similar score in their favor had allowed them to beat the same team a week earlier, but even sophomore goalie Christy Picard's 40 saves couldn't salvage the win the second time around. Hefner, Parks and team captain Laurie Odden '94 provided Middlebury scoring in the loss to BC.

After the Bowdoin Invitational, Middlebury enjoyed a couple days rest before journeying to Hanover, New Hampshire to do battle with the Big Green of Dartmouth. Unfortunately, the battle never even amounted to a skirmish as a quicker and stronger Dartmouth squad trounced the visitors 10-0.

Middlebury's solace after the drubbing was that they were hosting their own tournament last weekend. The invitees were Williams, Bowdoin and Wesleyan. The Panther offensive machine replaced their spark plugs for their first game against Wesleyan, resuming their early season domination and blanking the hapless Cardinals 14-0.

The stat sheet was two pages long for this game. Hefner and Parks posted hat tricks while Kirtley Horton '96 added two more. Lone goals were scored by Megan Tully '96, Laura Cowperthwait '94, Helen Froelich '97, Odden and Torrey Hinman '96. The onslaught was punctuated when goaltender Picard

swapped positions with Jen Hefner and managed to beat her opposing goalie with 40 seconds left in the contest. Team captain Odden was being modest when she termed the game a "snooze."

The problem with snoozes, however, is that teams are apt to lose their focus and not be as prepared for the following game. Bowdoin skated into the tournament final by beating Williams. Having lost a week prior to the Panthers in their own tournament, the incentive for the Polar Bears was strong.

The game was tightly contested throughout, with Bowdoin taking a 2-1 lead into the locker room after the first period of play. Middlebury hoped to even the score in the second segment, but Bowdoin's tight checking and overall sound defense prevented the Panthers from scoring while the visitors notched another goal.

The home team did net two in the third off the sticks of rookies Katie Koster and Sara Vintiadis, but the stubborn Polar Bears kept pace with two of their own on the way to the 5-3 victory.

Senior Odden, who scored the Panther's opening goal, felt obvious disappointment at losing her last home game, but pointed out that hockey is a lot more fun when the competition is equal. Indeed, "snoozes" tend to make even the spectators sleepy.

The key to the tournament final, according to Coach Bill Mandigo, was that Middlebury fell victim "to a red-hot goalie." Such things not only win Stanley Cups, but also ECAC games. The Panthers shot almost twice as many times as their opposition, yet Bowdoin's netminder came up big, stopping 34 shots.

The season winds to a close this week, with away games against Vermont and RPI before the season finale this coming weekend at the Boston College Tournament. Redemption will be the buzzword in Beantown as the Panthers drool at the prospect of a rematch with either Bowdoin or the host Eagles in the final.