

Women's hockey earns top seed in tournament

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Pullins) to make the final score 5-1. Hutchinson stopped nine shots in goal, and Middlebury fired 47 shots on UVM's goalie.

The Panthers appear to be excelling at the right time, building momentum for the playoffs with stifling defense and dominating offense. According to Labbe, "Emotionally and mentally we are at the peak of our game and it shows when we play. A number of our players have stepped up their level of play in the last few weeks, adding a great deal of depth to our line-up." It is that depth that has made Middlebury increasingly tough this season: there is no weak link in their game.

Middlebury retained the USCHO number one ranking again this week, and looks to be the odds-

on favorite in post-season play, with a current record of 22-2-1. The Panthers will host a first round ECAC playoff game this Saturday night, February 26, at 7 p.m. against RIT. Earlier in the season, the Panthers defeated RIT, who comes into the playoffs at 11-4-5 in league play, by the score of 5-0. The Tigers defense allowed the second lowest goals-against in league play this season, behind only Middlebury, but their offense struggled to put the puck in the net, averaging just over three goals per game, compared to Middlebury's nearly seven scored per game. Four times this season, RIT saw games end in scoreless ties. If Middlebury wins against RIT, they will host the ECAC semifinals and championship game March 4-5 at Kenyon Arena.