

Hockey women close home season undefeated

By Sarah Jones
Staff Writer

The Middlebury women's hockey team finished their regular season home schedule this weekend with a pair of wins over ECAC teams. On Friday night the Panthers (19-2-1, 16-0 ECAC Division III) cruised to a 9-1 win over Union College. Against Hamilton College on Saturday afternoon, Middlebury broke open a tight game in the third period and skated away with a 3-0 shutout. With the two victories, the Panthers extended their overall record against ECAC Alliance competition to 68-0 over the past four seasons.

Lowly Union (0-14 in the ECAC) posed

little problem for Middlebury on Friday.

Several players stood out in Middlebury's 9-1 victory. Leading the way was Michelle Labbe '01 who tallied four assists to go along with a goal. First-year Catherine Elkins also came up big with two goals and one assist. In addition, Christa McDougall '00 added one score and three assists in the blowout. Other goal scorers for the Panthers included senior Janice O'Neil, juniors Sylvia Ryan and Catherine Pullins, Jennifer Bahnson '01, and first-year Nina Kieves.

Saturday's game against Hamilton was the last regular season home game for seniors O'Neil, Suzanne Chepren, and Kristin Hack-

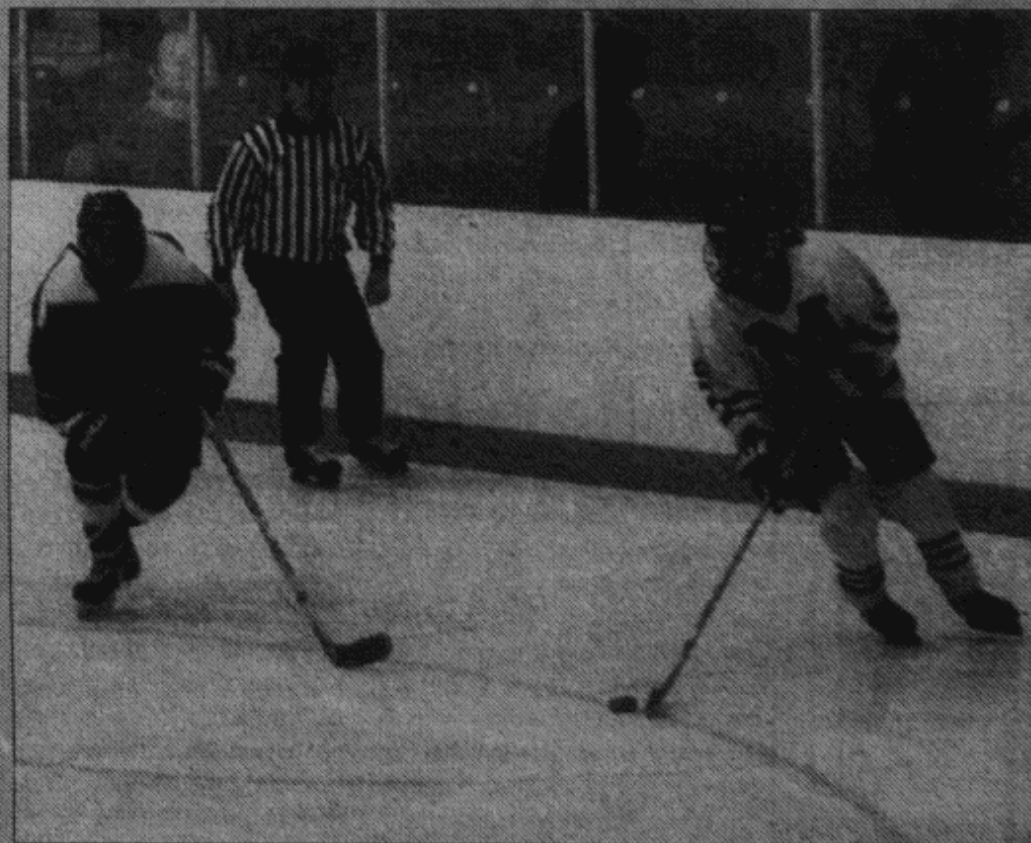
mann. The Panthers made sure that these three seniors went out of Chip Kemyon '85 Arena on top. The Panthers opened the game's scoring in the first period, fittingly, on a score from Janice O'Neil, with assists going to Labbe and McDougall. The Panthers and Continentals played stingy defense throughout the rest of the period and into the second, as the score remained 1-0 in favor of Middlebury heading into the final and decisive 20 minutes of action.

Hamilton appeared fired up at the beginning the third period, hungry to tie up the game with the Panthers. However, McDougall soon deflated Hamilton's intensity when she scored just 25 seconds into the period. She fired a slapshot past the Hamilton goaltender, giving Middlebury a 2-0 lead. The assist was credited to Elkins.

McDougall's goal proved to crush Hamilton's spirit. The Continental offense was unable to wrest the puck from Middlebury's potent offensive attack and could not muster much momentum. Labbe added another Panther goal late in the period to give Middlebury an insurmountable 3-0 lead. She fired a shot from the corner off a nice pass from Ryan. Beth Denoncourt '00 made nine saves between the pipes in the shutout win for the Panthers.

The two wins over the weekend keep Middlebury atop in the North division of the ECACs and ensures that the Panthers will remain atop the Division III Online poll.

The Panthers will wrap up their regular season schedule with a pair of road games against ECAC foes Bowdoin and Bates, on Friday and Saturday, respectively. Bowdoin is currently ranked fifth in Division III and have already clinched a playoff spot in the ECAC. Both games should serve as good preparation for the playoffs.



David Barreda

Middlebury women's hockey finished the regular season with a perfect record in the ECAC.