

# Women's hockey trips Williams

By Paul Krissoff

The Middlebury women's hockey team faced the arduous task of taking on ECAC powerhouse University of New Hampshire last Thursday after a month-long layoff for Christmas. With the poor luck of having only three practices to prepare for the home contest against a UNH squad that boasts six players on the United States National Team, the team still aimed for a solid game.

The Panthers, who finished the pre-Christmas segment of their schedule with a respectable 3-2 record, came out of the gates with no signs of rust against their formidable opponent. Middlebury managed to avoid an early rout with solid play from its first two forward lines and a stellar performance from goaltender Christy Picard '96. Picard, who had 60 saves on the evening, held UNH to only one first period goal.

The upstart Panthers kept the affair tight through the second period as well, although they could not get on the board. Picard continued her spectacular play, yielding only two goals in the period despite

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a constant barrage of shots. Middlebury showed signs of wear and tear later in the game, however, as the lack of practice time and conditioning contributed to a third period collapse. Despite the heroic efforts of Picard, the Panthers ultimately fell 8-0 in the relatively lopsided contest.

Middlebury looked to get back on track last Saturday as the squad took a break from its taxing ECAC schedule on the road at Williams. The Panthers beat Williams 7-1 in their first game of the season and have traditionally fared well against the Ephmen under the tenure of Coach Mandigo, but Saturday's game went down to the wire. Although the Panthers dominated Williams from start to finish, they still had difficulty putting the puck in the net, as they had in their previous game against UNH.

Despite outshooting the Ephmen 33-8, the Panthers found themselves locked in a scoreless tie going into the third period. Middlebury finally

broke the ice three minutes into the final period as leading scorer Jen Hefner '97 staked her team a tenuous 1-0 lead. The Panthers then held on for dear life as they fought off a number of penalties in the period, including a two minute five-on-three advantage. Mandigo cited the fine play of the penalty-killing unit of Hefner, Virginia Kreitler '98 and Caryn Sheftel '95 as well as the second line, consisting of Kreitler, Stephanie Hill '98 and Katie Oates '97. Picard recorded eight saves en route to recording her respectable second shutout of the season.

After staying close in the UNH game that could have been a blow-out from the outset and then struggling to get past a lesser Williams squad, the 4-3 Panthers will return to ECAC competition this weekend as they travel to Cornell and RIT. Middlebury is 0-3 in ECAC play, but has fallen to three of the league's finest teams: Providence, Brown and UNH. Will the team succeed in improving their record? Coach Mandigo believes his squad will play Cornell and RIT close, and just may return from New York with its first ECAC victory in hand.