

# Women's hockey plays great; wins seven out of eight

By Thomas Dubreuil

They don't play in front of huge, screaming crowds. In fact, many students have never seen them play at all. But one thing is clearly evident, they are in the midst of one of their most successful seasons ever. Who are these unheralded Middlebury athletes, one asks? They are the women's varsity ice hockey team and they are the proud owners of a 7-1 record.

With only ten returning letterwinners from last year's, 10-3 season, this year was thought to be one of rebuilding, but it has proved to be much more than that. Led by senior tri-captains Amanda Unger, Deb

Gow, and Cynthia White, the Lady Panthers have been unstoppable since suffering from their only defeat on Dec. 9 to perennial Division I power, Cornell University.

The Lady Panthers managed to beat Williams twice this season. Middlebury also defeated squads from U.V.M., Hamilton, Yale, Skidmore, and Boston University. Leading the Lady Panthers in scoring are forward Deb Gow (15 points on 7 goals and 8 assists) and, defensive player Amanda Unger (10 points on 3 goals and 7 assists). Both have proven to be two of the most potent scoring weapons in the vast Lady Panther arsenal.

Another Middlebury skater who has shown herself to be an able goal scorer is senior forward Justine Blodgett. Coach Bill Mandigo feels that, "Justine has really come into her own as a player this year." In the Panther's recent 6-3 victory over Boston University, Blodgett alone accounted for two of the six goals scored by Middlebury.

Not to be overlooked are defensive standouts Margi Sheehan '91, Margaret Heald '92 and Kim Griffith '93 who Mandigo refers to as being "very steady blue line defenders." The defenders have been a key instrument in the success of this Panther team. They are successful in

shutting down scoring threats from opposing teams. But the position of minding the net for Middlebury team should not be overlooked.

One unsung hero for the Panthers who deserves a great deal of credit is junior goalie Anne Truslow. Truslow has a 87.6 save percentage and her goals allowed per game average is a mere 2.1 goals per game.

When asked about the play of Truslow, captain Cynthia White stated, "She is playing out of her mind." Coach Mandigo says of Truslow, "She has done an excellent job and is improving with every game."

When talking to various players about why they are having such a successful season, one common answer they all gave was that a large part of it was due to the coaching they receive. "Bill is doing a great job. He works us hard in practice, but he

revenge is on the minds of many players. On Saturday the Panthers have another very big game when they meet another challenging opponent in the Bowdoin College Polar Bears.

Although their 2-1 victory over Yale on Jan. 14 was their biggest win to date, wins over Colby and Bowdoin would prove to be an even bigger thrill for most of the players. When asked about their chances of pulling out of victories over these two rivals, Gow, White, and Unger all feel that since returning from Christmas break, the team has really come together and is playing very well.

Practices have been going excellent and everyone is contributing. The feeling seems to be very positive and very optimistic. How important is this weekend to the women's ice hockey team? According to Gow,

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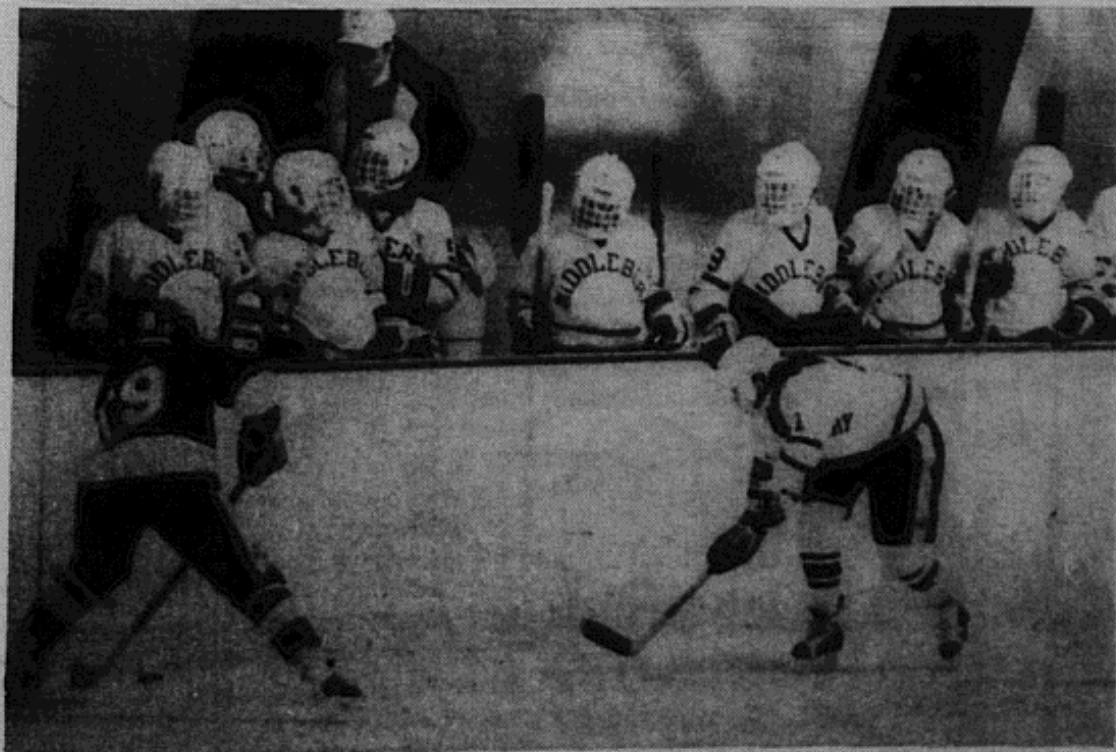
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makes it fun. We actually look forward to practice", were some of the comments received from one of his players. Assistant coaches Peter Saliba and D. Jackson have also added much to the success of the Panthers and are a major part of the team.

Looking forward, the women's hockey team has a tough weekend ahead. Tonight at 7:00 p.m. they face a very tough rival in Colby College. The Middlebury skaters suffered a heartbreaking 2-1 overtime loss to the White Mules last season and

"Beating these two teams would be the sweetest wins of my whole hockey career."

How is the confidence level of this Panther team heading into a tough stretch? Captain Amanda Unger summed it up simply by saying, "We will go all the way. There is no doubt about it." Whatever the outcome of this weekend's games, they should be extremely exciting. The Lady Panthers are playing sharp hockey. At 7-1, women's ice hockey is running wild, catch the spirit.



Jessica Tuck '92 battles for the puck in front of the Panther bench.

Photo by Mark Raskopf