

Women's hockey on road to nationals

(continued from page 20)

seeded Colgate Red Raiders faced the number 3 Williams Ephs. In a sloppy game that saw neither team play at its best, Colgate was able to sneak out a 1-0 win against the scrappy Williams team.

The teams took to the ice Sunday in the Championship game in front of a Middlebury women's hockey record crowd of 772 fans. The teams played hard in the first period, and Colgate was able to surprise the Panthers by scoring first, as the Red Raiders' Lauren Pufahl got the puck past Middlebury's Beth Denoncourt '00 9:00 into the game. Middlebury earned the equalizer with two minutes left in the first period, as Ryan got the puck by Colgate's standout goalie Jen Burtraw (assisted by Labbe and Elkins).

The second period saw both teams get scoring chances, but neither Colgate nor Middlebury could convert, so the third period began still a 1-1 deadlock. However, 13 seconds into the final period, Ryan scored her second of the game (assisted by Labbe), to give the Panthers their first lead of the game.

Midway through the period, Ryan earned the hat trick, again on a Labbe pass, to give Middlebury a 3-1 lead. The fans began cheering louder and louder as the victory drew closer, but the Panthers were not done. With 4:00 left in the game, Amber Neil '03 put Middlebury up 4-1 on an assist from twin

sister Erin and McDougall. Finally, with 3:00 left in the game, Ryan scored her fourth goal of the day to put an exclamation point on the Panther victory (assisted by Pullins and Elkins). In net, Denoncourt made 13 saves for Middlebury, while Colgate's Burtraw saved 32 of 37 shots.

Following the game, the ECAC All-Tournament team was announced. Named to the team were Labbe, Ryan, Pullins and Elkins, with Ryan and Pullins named co-MVPs for the ECAC DIII Champi-

After the 1-0 score the last time we played them, many people thought that RPI could play with us, but we definitely set the record straight on Saturday.

—Michele Labbe '01

onships. With the win, the Panthers move to 92-0 in ECAC league play and are currently riding a 39 game home winning streak.

The Panthers will now prepare over the next several weeks for the National Championship series at Northeastern University March 24-25. Middlebury will take the ice against the winner of the Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference, either Gustavus College or Augsburg College.

Said coach Bill Mandigo on the weekend, "It was a great weekend. We finished up our ECAC schedule the way we hoped we would. We accomplished one of our goals, and put ourselves in the position to go to the National Championships in Boston." He continued,

sailing with surprising upwind
"Beth Denoncourt made some spectacular saves and kept us in the game." Mandigo also praised the play of seniors Pullins and Ryan.

According to the winning goalie, Denoncourt, "I was excited that our team was faced with such a good challenge, being our [the six seniors] last game in the Kenyon Arena."

Labbe stated, "Our game against Colgate started out a little shaky. They came out ready to play us and forced us to pick up our game pretty quickly. Then after we scored 13 seconds into the third period, I knew the game was ours. We picked up the intensity, which carried us through the rest of the game and gave us

a great win."

Ryan commented, "It was just a great feeling coming out on to the ice in the third. The fan attendance was incredible. We took the time in between the second and third to get back to being the relaxed team that we usually are. We were a bit panicked during the first and second, and we needed to calm down and take control of the game. We came out flying in the third and proved to everyone that we are deserving of the number one ranking... Knowing that everyone is out there determined to throw it all on the line for the season to continue is the greatest feeling. That's what the team did in the final game. We came off the ice exhausted, but extremely happy."