HC women fall twice on the road

By Mike Ardizzone
Crusader Sports Staff

This past weekend, fans were treated to two hard-fought games at the Hart Center by Crusader Men’s Hockey, as the teams came up short after they lost both road games. The Lady ’Saders also played two games this weekend. Unfortunately, the results for the women were less favorable. Their valiant efforts came up short as they lost both road games, 1-0 to the Manhattanville Valiants on Saturday and 4-3 to the Sacred Heart Pioneers on Sunday. The weekend defeats leave the Crusaders winless in five games, last winning in a 7-0 whitewash of Salve Regina on Jan. 8. They stand 3-8-0 in the ECAC East, good for seventh place. Their overall record stands at 4-8-2.

While some would look at two losses in two days as a bad thing, one cannot help but see a myriad of positives and think otherwise. First off, they lost by one goal to the best team in the league. Manhattanville is undefeated and has the best offense and defense around. They’ve scored 107 goals and have only allowed up nine. Nine??? Nine goals in 11 total games is phenomenal. Considering the Crusaders lost 6-1 their previous game against the Valiants, their one goal defeat is an outstanding effort.

The source of this effort can be found in none other than junior goaltender Jenelle DiSanto. The native of North Reading, MA stopped 39 shots Saturday against the most potent offense the ECAC has to offer. The Crusaders played inspired hockey for the full 60 minutes as the lone goal scored midway through the second period. Unfortunately, the Crusaders weren’t able to punch a hole through the tenacious Manhattanville defense, and they left Purchase, NY without a victory.

It was on to Sacred Heart Sunday, and the Lady ’Saders seemed ready, but Sacred Heart was able to jump out to a 4-0 lead after the first period, leaving many to wonder, when would the losing streak end? Lyndsey Bennett and Sarah Bergin each had three points for the Pioneers in the first period. But, at 10:43 of the second, the Crusaders began to fight back. Meghan Mahoney lit the lamp to make it 4-1. Dara Ruppuci and Elizabeth Campbell assisted on the goal, but wait, there’s more. Just 16 seconds later, Castin Andrew found the net to beat Sacred Heart ‘tender Kim Derleth and cut the deficit to two. Rachelle Beaudoin assisted on the goal. The Crusaders were mounting their comeback with total dominance in the second period, as they held the Pioneers to just three shots.

The third period began with the Crusaders on fire, and just 22 seconds in, Stephanie Liebisch put the biscuit in the basket to pull the Crusaders within one. Erin Williams and Meghan Mahoney each had assists on the goal, but was all she wrote (no pun intended). Sacred Heart was able to contain the pressure of the reinvigorated Crusader offense and hold on to win 4-3.

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Overall, the weekend of Jan. 18-20 was a positive one for Crusader Hockey. The Men won an important match-up Saturday (heard on WCHC with Brad Holzwart and Mike Ardizzone calling the action), leaving them in second place in the MAAC, and the women’s teams are nearing the end of their seasons with just two more meets. As for the future, the tough part of the schedule seems to be over for the women as they take on MIT and Salve Regina, among others. The games against MIT and Salve Regina were easy victories for the Crusaders, and more victories are exactly what they need if they wish to make the playoffs come February. As for this upcoming weekend of Jan. 26-27, you can catch women’s hockey taking on MIT Saturday and Southern Maine Sunday at the Hart Center. The Lady ’Saders look to snap a 5 game losing streak this weekend, and you can definitely expect two strong performances.

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