

MN Girls' Hockey Hub

MINNETONKA FENDS OFF ROSEAU TO WIN THE MID-WINTER MELTDOWN CHAMPIONSHIP

Molly McHugh notched her seventh goal on the season while Maggie Nicholson scored the game-winner for the Skippers.

Heather Rule, SportsEngine12/29/16, 6:45PM CST

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Molly McHugh (25) flips the puck over fallen goaltender Kiana Flaig to give Minnetonka a 1-0 lead in the Mid-Winter Meltdown championship game. The Skippers beat Roseau 3-1. Photo by Mark Hvidsten, SportsEngine

Roseau
 Roseau
 1 - 3 Final
 Minnetonka
 Minnetonka
 Team 123T
 Roseau 0101
 Minnetonka1023
 Full Box Score
 Thu Dec 29, 2016 @ 7:45p Eden Prairie Tournament

Minnetonka was 0-for-4 on the power play in a game with lots of special-teams play. On paper, that looks like a lot of missed opportunities to try to break a 1-1 tie.

But it was an even-strength goal from freshman Maggie Nicholson with 5:40 left in regulation that gave the Skippers a one-goal lead over Roseau -- an advantage that stretched to 3-1 and earned Minnetonka the Mid-Winter Meltdown championship Thursday night at the Eden Prairie Community Center.

Nicholson got the puck in the Skippers' zone, found some open ice and took a nice shot from the top of the faceoff circle through a screen.

"I think she just surprised the goalie," Minnetonka coach Eric Johnson said. "We caught a break by the puck going in."

Nicholson credited teammate Sarah McDonnell, who had the assist, with the great pass on the goal. Nicholson said she saw the forward was overcommitted, so she cut back and she thinks the shot might have been deflected on the way in.

"There was two girls on me, so I just figured, shoot it, not try and get too far deep," Nicholson said.

As for the power play tonight, Johnson gave credit to the Rams' penalty kill for taking away passing lanes.

"They threw us for a loop," Johnson said.

So much so that he took a timeout with a few minutes left in the second period when the Skippers, ranked No. 9 in Class 2A in the state coaches' poll, had a power play. It's not an usual a time for them to take a timeout, Johnson said.

"We had one power play, didn't really like how it went because their kill was something we weren't anticipating," he said. "When we came back out, it wasn't much better than it was before the timeout."

The Skippers (7-5-2, 0-1) had a 1-0 lead at the first intermission on a goal from sophomore forward Molly McHugh. Her seventh of the season came with 5:18 left in the period, pouncing on one of the many rebounds in the midst of a scramble in front of the Roseau net.

In the second period on the game's first power play of the game, the Rams (7-6-1, 4-3-1) won an offensive zone faceoff and junior defenseman Ellice Murphy scored on a long shot from the point just six seconds into the man advantage. Her fifth goal of the season for a team-leading 18th point tied the game 1-1 midway through the middle frame.

It was all about special teams from there.

Despite a couple nearly back-to-back power plays in the second, the Skippers weren't able to break the tie. Earlier in the period when they held the 1-0 lead, senior forward Emma Bigham nearly made it 2-0 as she clanked iron with a shot.

It was just a couple minutes later that the Rams scored to make it 1-1 rather than a 2-0 Skippers lead.

"It was close," Bigham said. "Just had to keep going though after that."

After Nicholson's goal made it 2-1, the Skippers held on until sophomore defenseman Kailey Langefels sealed the win with an empty-net goal with 37 seconds left.

In goal, senior Elizabeth Kubicek made 18 saves for the Skippers, while sophomore Kiana Flaig stopped 30 shots on the other end for the Rams. The Skippers outshot the Rams 33-19.



Roseau's Jenna Byfluglien (3) put a hit on Minnetonka's Molly McHugh. Photo by Mark Hvidsten, SportsEngine

First Report

Minnetonka was 0-for-4 on the power play throughout the game, including 0-for-2 in the third period. On paper, that looks like a lot of missed opportunities to break a 1-1 tie.

But it was an even-strength goal from freshman Maggie Nicholson with 5:40 left in regulation that gave Minnetonka, ranked No. 9 in class 2A by the state coaches' poll, a 3-1 victory over Roseau to take the Mid-Winter Meltdown Championship Thursday night at the Eden Prairie Community Center.

The Rams (7-6-1, 4-3-1) seemed to have the jump to start the game, registering the first three shots on goal. But once the Skippers (7-5-2, 0-1) found their groove, they took a 1-0 lead into the first intermission. Sophomore forward Molly McHugh scored her seventh goal of the season with 5:18 left in the first period, pouncing on one of the many rebounds in the midst of a scramble in front of the Roseau net.

Midway through the second period, and on the first power play of the game, the Rams won an offensive zone faceoff and Ellice Murphy scored on a long shot from the point just six seconds into the man advantage. Her fifth goal of the season for a team-leading 18th point tied the game 1-1.

Despite nearly back-to-back power plays in the second, Minnetonka wasn't able to break the tie until Nicholson's even-strength winner in the third.

These two teams met earlier this month in Roseau, with the Rams winning that game 2-1.

In goal, senior Elizabeth Kubicek made 18 saves for the Skippers, while sophomore Kiana Flaig stopped 30 shots on the other end for Roseau.