

# Not much separating BF, Hartford

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By Tom Haley Staff Writer



Otter Valley's Marissa Connors (23) winds up to hit the ball past Windsor defender Alexina Peckinpough (55) during a field hockey game in Brandon.

File photo by Hannah Dicton

Bellows Falls and Hartford remain 1-2 in this week's installment of the *Rutland Herald/Times Argus* field hockey power rankings. Or maybe that should be No. 1 and No. 1-A.

Very little separates Bellows Falls from the Hurricanes. That's not only on paper but on the field. When they met one another it took a goal by Sadie Scott with only 54 seconds remaining in the overtime to preserve Bellows Falls' perfect record.

Hartford validated its case for being No. 2 or No. 1-A this week with a win over neighborhood New Hampshire rival Lebanon.

Lebanon was unbeaten until the Raiders met Hartford. The Hurricanes not only beat them, they made a gigantic statement by soundly defeating them, 4-1.

“It was exciting. It set the tone for where our season could go,” said Elsie Davis a Hartford senior midfield player.

Davis helped it go to another win the following day when she scored all three goals in a 3-0 win over Rutland.

“They played as a unit and they played strong,” said Hartford’s 30-year defensive coordinator Gail Patch of the Hurricanes in the win over Lebanon.

“It showed what Hartford can do,” Davis said.

“Lebanon is a great program,” said Hartford head coach Heather Scudder who is in her 33rd year of guiding the Hurricanes. “This is the first time we have beaten them since I returned to coaching four years ago.”

It was not only a win against a previously unbeaten team, it was a victory over a rival.

Putting that Upper Valley rivalry in its context, when Hartford and Lebanon had to cease playing one another on the football field many years ago, Greg Fennell did a simulated broadcast of the game on the radio the first year it was not played.

The coaching staff has some interesting resumes attached to it. Scudder is a legend in the sport and one of the most successful over her three-plus decades.

Patch gives the Hurricanes a tie to Rutland County. Her husband Charlie Patch was a star player on the 1961 Pittsford High School state championship basketball team — the only state crown the defunct school ever won.

Goalie coach Rachel Loseby was a standout goalie for Hartford and Keene State College. She had a record of 43-18 with nine shutouts at Keene from 2017 through 2019.

Saturday, the Hurricanes cross the Connecticut River once more. Awaiting them will be a Hanover team that is unbeaten (9-0-1) so the Marauders will have a lot of incentive to keep that zero in the loss column.

Field hockey life in the Upper Valley is sizzling.

Here are this week’s *Rutland Herald/Times Argus* power rankings with last week’s ranking in parentheses.

The rankings were constructed before Wednesday's games were played.

1. Bellows Falls 9-0 (1) The Terriers have outscored opponents 71-1. That's one for Ripley's Believe It Or Not.
2. Hartford 7-1 (2) The Hurricanes get another chance to strike a blow for Vermont field hockey on Saturday.
3. South Burlington 9-0 (3) Five of the victories are shutouts.
4. Mount Abraham 8-1 (4) The Eagles are again playing that grueling schedule that toughens them for the Division II playoffs.
5. U-32 5-1-1 (UR) The Raiders have a win and a tie against a strong Spaulding team. That gets your attention.
6. Spaulding 6-1-1 (5) If the Crimson Tide could just figure out that U-32 thing.
7. CVU 5-4 (8) The Redhawks lost to titans South Burlington and Mount Abe by a goal.
8. Essex 7-1 (7) The Hornets boast a tough defense.
9. Otter Valley (6-1-1) (9) The Otters have a potent attack and are solid at the other end of the field, too.
10. Windsor (10) Don't let the 5-3 win over one-time doormat Fair Haven fool you. That result says more about the surging Fair Haven program than it does about Windsor. The Yellow Jackets have a great chance to bag a third consecutive Division III state crown.

On the bubble: Burr and Burton, Rice, Woodstock, Montpelier and St. Johnsbury.