

## MLBT MIDDLEMEN SQUEAK PAST LONG VALLEY WOLFPACK

Sunday night at BSA proved to be exciting from start to finish, as the Middlemen pushed past the Wolfpack 5-4. The teams kicked off with end to end action from the drop of the puck, with hard hitting along the boards and fast paced offense. The Wolfpack began with a 2 man advantage just a minute and a half into the game, but Middlemen netminder Thomas Huber stopped the first scoring opportunities, and a quick move up the ice gave MLBT a scoring opportunity with just 3 attackers on the ice. But it was Wolfpack goalie Mike Impellizeri who came up big to keep the game scoreless, stopping a breakaway. Roles were reversed just a few minutes later, as Mountain Lakes had the two man advantage for over a minute, but goalie Impellizeri stopped the offensive effort, and a rebound missed the open side of the net with the goaltender down. The Wolfpack killed off the 5 on 3, but with just 29 seconds left in the second penalty, MLBT hit the net, as a shot from the point from Geoff Smith was deflected by Matt Wendler past the goaltender. Just 41 seconds later the Middlemen took a 2 goal lead, as Joe Spagnola hit the top of the net on a rising shot from outside the circle. The Wolfpack almost came within a goal just seconds later, as they forced the play in front of the net and drew a penalty in the process. The rest of the period became a battle of defense, as both teams kept the shots to a minimum and shut down most of the offensive attacks.

The Wolfpack started the second period with a jump, and their efforts paid off just a minute and a half in, as Chris Williams hit the net on a feed from Ryan Armenti. Billy Burgoyne would give the Middlemen back the two goal lead three minutes later, with help from Connor Silverstein. MLBT added another goal three minutes later, with Smith recording his second point of the game on the goal. Burgoyne also notched his second point of the game, as he was credited with an assist on the play. The offense of the Wolfpack picked up the pace after giving up two goals in three minutes, and Andy Caracciolo gave Long Valley life with 7 minutes left in the period, with Chad Heal garnering an assist on the play. The Wolfpack would finish the period with a strong offensive effort, but MLBT netminder Huber was up to the challenge, and the Middlemen retained the two goal lead going into the final period.

There was no lack of drama in the tightly called contest, as Long Valley tried to keep the game within reach. A goal by Colin Waitroski on a play set up by Chris Williams pulled the Wolfpack to within one, but that was as close as they would get. As the final minutes wound down, Long Valley pulled the goaltender in an effort to squeak out a tie, but a quick pickoff play by Alec Fernandez gave the Middlemen back the two goal lead. The Wolfpack may have been down, but certainly were not giving up, as they came right back to within 1 goal of tying the game, as Heal scored with 11 seconds to go. A few more seconds, and they may have had their tie, but the buzzer sounded before they could score the equalizer. The next meeting between these two teams is sure to be exciting, and the outcome is anyone's guess.