

Stevenson Wins Gee Tourney, 4-2

By TOM DONOGHUE
Sports Editor

It was "Suburban Stanley Cup" night in Observerland, with a second period four-goal outburst by Stevenson High telling the story.

After a scoreless first period, the Suburban League champion Stevenson Spartans slapped in four goals paced by two from Jerry DiRusso. It appeared that Gerry Goode's squad was en route to an easy victory.

But the first annual George Gee memorial tournament trophy was not going to slip away from Churchill that easily.

Adam Mitchell's Charger crew, which finished second to Stevenson in the final Suburban standings, popped in two goals in the early moments of the third and kept the crowd of more than 1,400 on their feet to the final buzzer.

When it was all over, the Spartans had hung on to a 4-2 victory in a tournament that saw the top two teams survive to the final over Bentley, Franklin, Southfield and Southfield Lathrup.

Churchill and Stevenson were both tight in the opening period, each waiting for the other to make the first mistake. Stevenson was called for three penalties and Churchill two, with Spartan goalie Van Vermeesch making three saves and Churchill netminder Mike Parks kicking out nine shots.

Stevenson, which had gone through the Suburban League undefeated, drew first blood at the 1:41 mark in the second period.

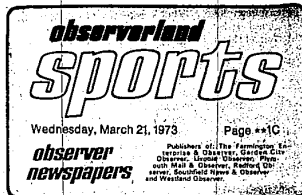
DiRusso beat Parks, Bob McLive picking up the assist, and the Spartans were first on the board.

Then came a five minute span that could have broken it wide open for Churchill. But Spartan goalie Vermeesch was "Mr. Everywhere" for Stevenson and shut the door on everything Churchill was throwing at him.

Churchill's Bob Rion missed on a point blank shot and Brian Veasey was stymied on a clean breakaway. Vermeesch making a brilliant save.

"We just weren't getting any breaks," said Churchill's Mitchell. "Vermeesch was coming up with some great saves to break our back."

It could have been something like 4-1 Churchill midway through the second but the puck was making it quite clear that it was bouncing Stevenson's way.



At 9:50, with Churchill's Rion off for elbowing, Stevenson made it a 2-0 contest on a goal by Steve Hillman, his 23rd in the league. Kurt Geiger got the assist.

Then, with everything starting to skate their way, the Spartans poured it on with two more goals in a matter of 39 seconds. DiRusso deflected in a shot from Gordie Bowie and Don Finn notched his 28th in the league, Dale Marczak getting the assist.

The 4-1 came an Observerland first.

"Score-0" was played between the second and third periods with Paul Horgan of Stevenson High putting the puck into an open net the full



GERRY GOODE
"Moving" Stevenson Coach



ADAM MITCHELL
Accepted Tough Loss

Parks and Recreation, went to Stevenson High.

Mrs. Gee, Livonia Mayor Edward McNamara and the Observer sports editor presented the traveling trophy to Coach Goode and captain Don Finn. The tourney's valuable player award went to Bentley High's Bob Wasilewski, who popped in five goals in the two games his squad played.

"The breaks started catching up with us in that third period," said Goode, whose Spartans finished 16-33 overall for '72-73. "I knew we had a long way to go in that third period and the winds of fortune can change so fast out there on the ice."

"Vermeesch's play had to break their back," added Goode. "He kept us in the game. If he had come up with a mediocre performance, it's simple -- we would have lost."

It just turned out not to be Churchill's night to shine.

Halfway through the hockey clash it was announced that the Charger cagers had been crushed in state regional action by Detroit Murray-Wright and the Charger puckmen attempted to make a school turnaround but failed.

"Sure we were disappointed, we wanted that trophy," added Mitchell. "We knew we could have beaten Stevenson with a break here or there, but they won and the kids accepted it."

"The first thing after the game, they were asking me when do we start practice for next year," finished Mitchell, whose Chargers wound up 12-7-3 overall for '72-73.

Churchill.....0 0 2-2
Stevenson.....0 4 0-4

FIRST PERIOD

No Score
Penalties: McLive (S), holding, 2:52; Rion (C), elbowing, 3:30; P. Vermeesch (S), hooking, 3:30; Hill (C), elbowing, 11:29; P. Vermeesch (S), high-sticking, 11:32

SECOND PERIOD

Stevenson - DiRusso (McLive), 1:41
Stevenson - Hillman (Geiger), 9:50
Stevenson - DiRusso (Bowie), 11:29
Stevenson - D. Finn (Marczak), 12:30
Penalties: P. Vermeesch (S), high-sticking, 2:07; Veasey (C), tripping, 3:46; Rion (C), elbowing, 6:40; Marczak (S), 12:23

THIRD PERIOD

Churchill - Kacalansky (Ursitti), 4:44
Churchill - Ursitti (Gagnon), 6:27
Penalties: Marczak (S), cross-checking, 10:54; B. Finn (S), interference, 12:05; Hillman (S), misconduct, 12:05; Hillman (S), game misconduct, 12:24

SHOTS ON GOAL

CHURCHILL.....3 8 19
STEVENSON.....9 12 4-25



OPEN NET AHEAD -- Stevenson High's Brian VanNorman (14) has the Churchill net as his target with Charger netminder Mike Parks caught out of position along with a defenseman. Parks managed to get back in position to stop

VanNorman but it wasn't enough as Stevenson slapped in four goals in the second period to upend Churchill in the tourney finale, 4-2. (Observer photo by Tom Donoghue)

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CLOSE CALL -- Stevenson netminder Van Vermeesch had a touch of the "luck of the Irish" a day early when this Churchill deflection just missed sliding into the Stevenson net early in the second period of the George Gee tourney finale which the Spartans went on to win, 4-2. (Observer photo by Tom Donoghue)