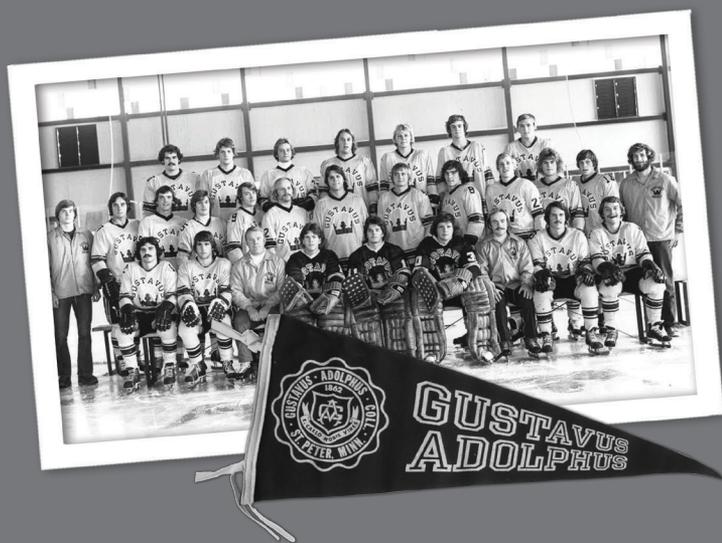


GUSTAVUS MEN'S HOCKEY

1976-1977

The Forgotten Team



.....
CHRIS MIDDLEBROOK '79

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PREFACE

When you enter Don Roberts Ice Rink in Lund Arena at Gustavus Adolphus College you will see the banners hanging on the east end. They commemorate the many MIAC league championships won by Gustavus men's ice hockey teams over the years as well as MIAC playoff championships. There are no banners commemorating the Gustavus men's accomplishments in the national tournaments, first the NAIA and then NCAA. Even if there were such banners what you wouldn't see, no matter how much you might search, or squint your eyes, is the most prestigious banner, the largest banner of all, from this visual celebration of Gustavus men's hockey glory and accomplishment. You won't see this banner because it is not there. No, it is not in storage or taken down for cleaning, this is clear because there is no empty place where the banner normally hangs. The absent banner is the one that celebrates the NAIA National Ice Hockey Champions of 1976-77, the Gustavus Adolphus men's team. This is because even as Gustavus scored a goal with 30 seconds left in the third period to beat St. Scholastica 3-2 in the 1977 championship game and the celebration began on the ice, on the bench and in the stands, it then ended with a referee denying the goal. The 1976-77 team were national champions, the first ever for Gustavus and the only team in the history of Gustavus hockey to be so. But then they weren't. This is the extraordinary story of the 1976-77 season, that final game, and the players and coaches from that team who should be remembered and honored. The story, however, begins almost 160 years ago.

PERIOD 1 GUSTAVUS HOCKEY HISTORY

Gustavus Adolphus College was founded in 1862, but not initially as a college nor under the name Gustavus Adolphus. Gustavus began its history as a Lutheran parochial school in the city of Red Wing. Its original name was Minnesota Elementarskola. The school then move to the unincorporated town of East Union, where in 1865 it was renamed St. Ansgar's Academy. It was not until 1873 that the school decided on its permanent name and location, Gustavus Adolphus College in Saint Peter, Minnesota.

Although the first Gustavus hockey team was formed in 1929, formal organized ice hockey did not begin at Gustavus until the winter of 1936-37, when a varsity team was formed, playing five games and losing all five. Gustavus continued to field varsity hockey teams on a yearly basis, but there were a few gaps. There were no teams during war time of 1942-45. Two other years, 1940-41 and 1951-52, there were simply not enough interested players to form a team. In 1962-63, after a previous season record of 3-16, Gustavus again did not present a varsity hockey team. Gustavus decided that having a barely competitive hockey team was better than having no team at all. But Gustavus first needed a person to coach the team.

The choice was Don Roberts, a 1956 Gustavus alumni who had played varsity football, basketball and baseball. After graduating from Gustavus, Roberts joined the Marines where he rose to the rank of Captain. In 1959 Roberts returned to Gustavus to teach in the Department of Physical Education. He was appointed head coach of the wrestling team and then in 1961 head football coach. By 1964 Roberts had stopped coaching the wrestling team. To Gustavus he became the logical choice to coach hockey. Not that Roberts had any experience as a hockey player or coach. He may have played some shinny hockey on the Pomme de Terre River

while growing up in Appleton, Minnesota, but that didn't mean he could actually ice skate with any proficiency. But Roberts could coach and he could definitely lead. That first season under Coach Roberts, 1964-65, Gustavus finished with a 0-14 record in the MIAC. Come the 1965-66 season and there were no high expectations for Gustavus hockey. This made the 16-2 record and a MIAC championship, Gustavus's first ever, all the more stunning.

For Coach Roberts and Gustavus hockey, however, it was only the beginning. For the next 11 seasons, 1966 to 1976, Gustavus was the MIAC champion nine times. In 1968, when the first NAIA National Hockey Championships was held, Gustavus was one of the four teams competing, finishing in third place. Gustavus was third again in 1969 and 1970. In 1972 the Gusties finished second, and again in 1975. In 1976 they once again were MIAC champions and finished in third place in the NAIA national tourney. In the 11 seasons from 1965-66 to 1975-76 Gustavus's combined record was 199 wins, 49 losses, and one tie. If anyone had ever made fun of Coach Roberts' inability to skate, they had stopped laughing a long time ago.

In the 1930s, the Gustavus hockey team skated on an outdoor rink on campus. Then for a number of years a natural ice rink was maintained inside Myrum Memorial Fieldhouse. By the late 1940s, however, it was outdoors again. When Don Roberts began his coaching career the team practiced on an outdoor rink on the north side of Myrum. The ice was prepared and maintained by hockey players on work programs and the clearing of the snow from the ice before and during practices was done by the rest of the team.

However, in mid-November, before the rink was ready but the ice had formed on the sloughs and backwaters of the Minnesota River, the team would pile into a bus at 4 p.m., after classes were done, and make the 10-minute drive to Coach Roberts' favorite slough where the team would skate until deep into the evening's dusk. There were no boards and pucks would often end up in the

bullrushes along the border where the ice was not as thick. Skaters breaking through the ice was not an uncommon occurrence. This was the early season preparation for the perennial MIAC champions of the mid 60s until the early 70s.

When the playing season and games began there was no home ice in Saint Peter. The Gustavus team would drive up to the Twin Cities, initially playing at Braemar Arena in Edina and then other Twin Cities rinks. Away games against Saint John's and Saint Mary's were played on outdoor rinks. Following the team to these home and away games was an ever-increasing group of Gustavus students, often numbering in the hundreds. They were an important element of Gustavus hockey domination of the MIAC, known for their very loud and envelope-pushing support of the team.

The extreme success of Gustavus hockey under Coach Roberts attracted the attention and financial support of Russell Lund and the Lund family. Russell Lund agreed that a modern indoor ice arena should be built on the Gustavus campus and initially donated \$50,000 in 1972 to its construction. By November 1973 the hockey rink had been completed, including refrigeration for the ice. Further construction on the rink occurred in phases; 1974 the roof and sidewalls, 1975 permanent seating and locker rooms and by the fall of 1976 the rink was fully enclosed and a heating system installed.

The non-compensated general contractor for the entire project? Coach Don Roberts. By this time Russell Lund and the Lund family had contributed over \$750,000 to the building of Lund Arena. The Gustavus team now had a first-rate arena to play in and their rowdy student supporters a comfortable place to cheer on the team.

PERIOD 2

ANOTHER MIAC TITLE SEASON

Preseason tryouts, early success, and a trip to Sweden

Come the fall of 1976 and another season of major Gustavus hockey success was expected. Eighteen lettermen were returning from a team that had finished 23-4, joined by one high-profile transfer and the usual high numbers of talented freshmen hoping to make the team. Add the players who had played on the JV team the previous season and there were a total of 85 candidates for the 1976-77 Gustavus varsity hockey team.

TEAM OUTLOOK

Gustavus hockey 1976-77 . . . what promises to be an exciting year of action from southern Minnesota to Sweden. Head Coach Don Roberts has twenty returning veterans to face a tough season slate, including six contests during a seventeen day tour of Sweden.

The team will be trying for its eleventh (11) MIAC title in 12 years under Coach Roberts. And their appearance in the NAIA National Tournament last year continues to make them the only team to participate in every Tournament since its' inception (nine).

Coach Roberts will have Mike Kemp as his assistant coach this year. They will be trying to replace four key players who are not returning. All-Americans Gary Hansen, John Mulvihill and Larry Moore graduated while the Outstanding Freshman, Mike Greeder, has left Gustavus.

The offense will most likely depend on the "goal" line of Steve Hansen, Jim Williams and Mike Cody. Only juniors, they led the team last year with 138 points in 27 games, including 60 goals. Seniors Tom Lindsey (16 goals, 43 points) and Craig Miller (12-29) will be expected to help along with sophomores Dave Kunz (15-35) and Paul Rutt (11-22).

The defense will miss the play of Mulvihill but four returning veterans should provide adequate protection. Senior co-captains Bruce Edwards and Brian Parr will anchor the blueline corp along with junior Mark Weber and sophomore Dan Horecka.

Goal tending remains the questionmark with the departure of Moore. The job will likely go to junior Brad Auctin. Sophomores Steve Kittay and Mike Gephart will back him up. Both played on the varsity reserve last year.

The team starts play with the Louisville Slugger Thanksgiving Classic in Fridley. The Tournament includes Wisconsin-Stout, Concordia and St. Scholastica. Other non-conference opponents include Wisconsin-River Falls, Mankato State and Northern Michigan. MIAC foes are Hamline, Augsburg, St. Thomas, St. John's' St. Mary's', St. Olaf and Concordia.

A big year for Gustavus hockey. Just four seniors on a team striving for the MIAC title, a National Tournament berth and taking on international competition. An exciting year on the "hill" for Gustie hockey fans.

The motivation of all was of course the hope to skate for the perennial MIAC champions and NAIA national tournament competitors. In addition, being a varsity hockey player at Gustavus came with significant prestige within the student body. Playing varsity hockey for Gustavus on the 76-77 team, however, presented an additional major attraction and motivation. In December the team would be traveling to Sweden for two weeks to compete against Swedish teams and would also visit Oslo and Copenhagen. In doing so Gustavus would be only the second US college hockey team to compete overseas, following the Yale team of two years previous.

Two weeks of tryouts occurred, including scrimmages against Mankato State and between the players initially assigned to the varsity and the JV. When the ice chips had settled and the annual alumni game took place, Coach Roberts had picked his team which would begin the season and then travel to and compete in Sweden. Sixteen returning lettermen, one freshman, three players from the previous season's JV (including a player who became the first player during Coach Robert's career to make the team for the first time as a junior), and finally one player, a sophomore, who had sustained a knee injury during tryouts his freshman year and was finished for that season.

The season began with the annual alumni game the Sunday before Thanksgiving. The 1976 alumni game, however, was a unique event in that there was a second team, in addition to the alumni, which would be competing against the varsity and against the alumni in a round robin; Governor Wendell Anderson and his "Governor's Olympian Team." The Governor's team was made up of former US Olympic and National team players including Herb Brooks and Ken Yackel. They, and the Gustavus alumni, were two excellent hockey teams. The varsity beat them both.

The Gusties then opened the regular season with two victories in the annual Thanksgiving Tourney in Columbia Heights, 5-2 over Wisconsin Stout and 4-2 over arch rival St. Scholastica. The victories kept coming, 8-1 against Hamline, 8-2 over River Falls and in the last game before fall semester finals and the journey to Sweden, 11-4 over Saint Marys.

On December 18, 1976 the entire Gustavus hockey team, together with a number of family members and supporters, boarded a plane in Minneapolis for a direct overnight flight to Stockholm. None of the players had ever been overseas before. Some had never been on a plane. No-one had any clue how to sleep on the eight-hour flight. The team arrived at Arlanda Airport in Stockholm the following morning and boarded the bus that would drive them the three hours to Karlstad. Some players actually slept on the bus ride. Others simply lost consciousness.

Prior to the trip, the entire team had met with a professor of Swedish at Gustavus so that he could give them some insights and understanding of the Swedish culture. One of the things he emphasized was that Swedes were non-violent. It thus came as a shock to the team when they pulled up to their hotel in Karlstad to see two men in a fistfight on the sidewalk outside the entrance. The Hotel was called Drott, or Queen. Bathrooms were at the end of the hallway and not in the rooms, not unlike the dorms at Gustavus. The team had no trouble sleeping that first night, which was a good thing.

The next afternoon, December 20, they played their first match against the Farjestads Junior Team, the defending Swedish national champion. On the ride to the hockey arena the bus stopped on a hill overlooking a gigantic ice rink. Skaters were playing a game with a ball and short curved sticks. "This is the sport called Bandy," the team was informed. "It is a big sport here in Sweden."

Gustavus won that game against Farjestads Juniors 12-5, a result that was shocking to the Swedes. They had not expected the Americans to be so skilled. Paul Rutt, Steve Hansen, Mike Cody and Jim Williams each scored two goals in the game. The second game was the evening of December 22 against a senior team called Grums. But first, on December 21 there was a day trip to Oslo where one of the streets was too narrow for the bus to get by the small parked car so the entire team got out of the bus and lifted the car up on to the sidewalk, clearing the way.

Grums is a town outside of Karlstad. The Grums hockey team consisted entirely of grown men. Gustavus, a collection of 18 to 21 year olds. The score after two periods was 4-2 for Grums. Gustavus tied the score 4-4 with two goals in the first four minutes of the third period but Grums scored 30 seconds later to go up 5-4. Two goals by Doug Coombe, ten seconds apart with a minute and a half to go, gave Gustavus the 6-5 win. After its exciting victory the team returned to the locker room to find someone had climbed through their locker room window and stolen many of the players'

money. This was quite contrary to the Gustavus Swedish professor telling the team before they left that the crime rate was very low in Sweden.

The next morning the team returned by bus to Stockholm and a game that evening, December 23, against a first division club, IK Gota. Another victory, this time 8-5. Gustavus would again be playing Gota on December 26. But first there was Christmas Eve and then Christmas Day. In Stockholm the team stayed in the Djurgarden District at a ski jump called Fiskartorpet, in bunk bedded dorm rooms built into the ski jump tower. There was also a dining hall area where on the afternoon of December 24, Christmas Eve, there was a traditional Santa Lucia performance for the team. The Santa Lucia girls all wore wreaths of burning candles in their hair as they sang Santa Lucia and other Swedish Christmas songs.

After the performance, a dance party began. The songs included ABBA's "Dancing Queen" which had just been released. The rest of Christmas Eve and all of Christmas Day the team spent together, the first time any had been away from their families on Christmas. On Christmas morning, the team went to the service at Gustavus Adolphus Church. That evening a number of the players concluded that the slope the ski jump was built on would be an excellent sliding hill. Wearing their Jofa helmets and other hockey gear they spent several hours sliding down and then struggling back up the hill. The following day, December 26, it was game day again, the final game of the Sweden trip, with Gota again the opponent. Gustavus won again, this time by a 7-4 score led by two goals from Dave Kunz. A four-win, zero-loss Swedish hockey adventure, the team then took the train to Copenhagen where it spent the final two days of an extraordinary experience, including New Years Eve in Copenhagen. They returned home to Saint Peter with an overall record of 9 wins 0 losses for the season, a team that, even though they would not have recognized it themselves, was beginning to resemble a family after their Scandinavian adventure together.

Gustavus Roster for Sweden Trip

- Goalies:** Brad Austin, Junior
Steve Kittay, Sophomore
- Defense:** Bruce Edwards, Senior
Brian Parr, Senior
Mark Weber, Junior
Dan Horecka, Sophomore
Steve Howells, Sophomore
Chris Middlebrook, Sophomore
- Forwards:** Craig Miller, Senior
Tom Lindsey, Senior
Steve Hansen, Junior
Mike Cody, Junior
Jim Williams, Junior
Chris Halden, Junior
Stu McCormick, Junior
Warren Loken, Junior
Dave Kunz, Sophomore
Paul Rutt, Sophomore
Doug Coombe, Sophomore
Keith Hedlund, Sophomore
Tim Bohan, Freshman
- Head Coach:** Don Roberts
- Asst. Coach:** Mike Kemp
- Manager:** Ray Lewis
- Sports Information Director:** Bob Greenberg
- Team Doctor:** Vern Amundson

Gustie 'ishockey' tops Swedes

By JOHN CLINGER
Free Press Sports Writer
ST. PETER — The Gustavus Adolphus College hockey team's two-week trip to Sweden last Christmas was many things.

• It was, of course, a highly-successful competitive venture. The Gusties won all four of their games, including a 12-5 opening triumph over a Karlstad junior team which had won Sweden's under-20 national championship the last two years.

• It was a journey which began with the 33 travelers sleeping on straw mattresses at the Drottia, likened by one team member to Bemidji's Markham East (GA's quarters on overnight trips to play Bemidji State), and which ended in almost regal splendor at Copenhagen's Hotel Scandinavia. There, \$15 or less got them a room and continental breakfast worth three times that during peak tourism periods.

• It was a trip on which the tourists experienced virtually every means of transportation known to man—planes, trains, buses, taxis, ferries, cable cars, automobiles, subways and, coach Don Roberts added, "a lot of walking." Most of the adults and many of the players went straight to bed when they got home, even though their plane arrived back in the Twin Cities at 8:15 p.m. New Year's Eve. After all, it WAS 3:15 a.m. Swedish time.

• And, best of all, the Gustie players did all that at a personal cost of about \$450 for air fare and \$100 to \$300 spending money. Don't let that figure fool you, though; their lodging and meals in Sweden were paid by the Swedish Ice Hockey Federation.

From a hockey standpoint, the trip proved educational but not particularly useful except as an agent for bringing the team closer together. To begin with, the Gusties found the European style of play boring. "All they do is circle around in their own zone," co-captain Brian Parr reported. Coach Roberts said opposing coaches thought Gustavus "didn't hang onto the puck long enough. We thought they did too much stickhandling and not enough shooting." It would seem the game results support the Gustie theory.

Particularly troubling to the American visitors were two factors: the lack of emotion the Swedes displayed and the small crowds the four games attracted. "Whenever they scored they just skated off the ice and the guys on the bench sat still," Lewis said. He estimated the largest crowd Gustavus drew was at most 150. They watched a game between a Division I senior team from Stockholm and Russia's Dynamos which drew more spectators, but not as many as jammed the stands outside in freezing weather to view a bandy game. (Bandy is an ice skating game played on a field at least the size of a football field, with 11 players on a side using a curved stick to hit a



small ball into a soccer-sized goal.)

Although all of the teams they faced were bigger than Gustavus, the Minnesotans felt the Swedish players did not body-check enough. "They're fantastic skaters," Parr said. "If they would just hustle more and use the body instead of hooking and holding... We had guys practically getting tackled."

However, Lewis noted, "Our defensemen made up for it in front of the net." Any uncertainty over treatment the travelers may have felt before their arrival in Stockholm Dec. 20 was quickly dispelled. "Considering the Christmas season, the hospitality the (Swedish Ice Hockey) Federation, club teams and coaches provided was great; we would have a hard time being as good hosts as they were," said GA hockey publicist Bob Greenberg.

Ironically, members of the teams the Gusties played seemed less excited than their superiors. Perhaps because of eagerness to be with their families, the Swedish players were reluctant to mingle with the Gusties off the ice.

Perhaps, too, it was because they blamed the Minnesotans for the weather they brought with them. The Americans arrived in Stockholm during what they were told was the first blizzard in five years, and left Stockholm for Copenhagen Dec. 28 during the second blizzard in five years.

On arrival in Stockholm Saturday the 18th the Minnesotans busied four hours to Karlstad and checked into the Drottia, which in addition to straw mattresses featured a dimly-lit lobby, two bathrooms per floor and one bath, period. For most of the entourage it was one of the more enjoyable portions of the trip because, as one team mem-

ber said, "It was our only chance to stay around the other tourists." The team was housed separately in Stockholm, and the 38 Minnesotans were scattered throughout Copenhagen's Hotel Scandinavia.

Saturday night, retired St. Peter contractor Hank Komatz phoned the U.S. to find out how the Minnesota Vikings had done. He repeated the procedure the following week.

The Gusties practiced Sunday and played Farjestad Sport Club, the junior team, Monday. The game was close until Tom Lindsey, Steve Hansen and Jim Williams scored in a three-minute span to make it 7-4 midway through the second period. Gustavus won 12-5, with Paul Rutt, Williams, Hansen and Mike Cody scoring two goals and Mark Weber, Lindsey, Parr and Keith Hedlund tallying once. Goalie Brad Austin made 34 saves as Farjestad outshot the visitors 39-37.

The Cody-Hansen-Williams line was to wind up the trip with 14 of GA's 33 goals, working their passing game to near-perfection on the wider European rinks. They particularly effective on the power play, scoring six goals that way as the Gusties converted 7-of-15 opportunities to their opponents' collective 2-for-14.

"Their power play," Parr explained, "was just to let the defensemen blast away and hope for a tip. When we were on a power play, they put their forwards way out at the blue line and it was just like a 3-on-2 for us."

On Tuesday the group got a very brief glimpse of Oslo, Norway, riding a bus eight hours each way for two or three hours of sightseeing. At a restaurant near Oslo's famous Holmenkoll ski jump, they found a hamburger cost \$4 and a beer \$1.50. "It made us appreciate the

Swedes were picking up the tab for most of our food," Lewis said.

Wednesday they played Grums Sport Club, a senior team in Division I, the second level of Swedish hockey. Despite outshooting their hosts 38-17, it took two goals in 10 seconds by Doug Coombe in the waning moments for the Gusties to pull out a 6-5 victory.

"Their goaltender was unbelievably hot," said Williams, who scored three goals in the game. "Doc (Vern) Ohmanson said he was jumping up and down in the locker room."

Cody had the other goal and freshman goalie Steve Kittay got the win as the Gusties ended the Karlstad portion of the trip. As they left for Stockholm Thursday, they gave a Gustavus hockey jacket to their do-everything hero, Mickey, who among other things had taken them shopping. "He knew where all the sales were," Lewis said. "We got some dandy warm-up jackets for \$12 and clogs for \$10."

That night they played the first of two games against Gota Sport Club, another Division I team which had beaten some of the best teams in their class. Outshooting Gota 45-35, the Gusties prevailed 8-5. Cody scored two goals and Parr, Hansen, Kunz, Bruce Edwards, Tim Bohan and Coombe added one apiece, while Austin blocked 30 shots.

In Stockholm the players stayed at Fiskarsörpet, a skiing complex built for the 1912 Olympics, while the rest of the group was lodged at the Carlton Hotel downtown. They attended Christmas services at Gustavus Adolphus Church and were treated to a St. Lucia candlelight service by members of a girls' team handball team. "Team handball is similar to soccer, the main difference being that the ball is handled instead of kicked."

The Gusties completed the hockey portion of the trip Sunday the 26th with a 7-4 win over Gota. Kunz scored two goals and Steve Howells, Parr, Hansen, Craig Miller and Cody contributed one as they outshot the hosts 25-23. Austin recorded his third win in the nets.

The group spent the final days of the trip partying and sight-seeing in Copenhagen, where the Scandinavian Air Service gave them special rates at the posh Hotel Scandinavia, owned by SAS.

Back on campus Monday, the Gusties faced the harsh reality of having been off the ice for eight days. They were thankful to have another eight days to prepare for next Tuesday's home game against St. John's.

In the locker room, Roberts looked at Mark Weber, whose August bride Jeanne had accompanied him on the trip.

"The honeymoon is over, boys," Roberts joked. "If you don't think other teams are going to come in snorting..."

The locker room exploded as Dan Horecka asked Roberts, "What happened to that (blue with orange stripes) hat you bought, coach?"

Roberts admitted he had finally removed it.

Down the stretch to another title

On January 11, 1977, Gustavus began the second half of its season with a 6-0 victory over Saint John's. Two new additions joined the team, Brad Perlich, a transfer from Minnesota, and Dave Gunderson, a freshman who was excelling on the JV. Four more victories followed, including wins of 6-2 over Augsburg, 10-9 over St. Thomas, and 18-2 over Saint Mary's.

At this point, coaches Roberts and Kemp had a conversation with Captain Bruce Edwards. They wanted Bruce's thoughts on why the team was playing so well. Could we keep it up? Edwards responded that, "This was a special team. The Sweden experience had brought us all together. Yes, we would keep it up."

The undefeated streak came to an end at 13 with a 6-3 loss to Augsburg on January 25. Then two more victories, 8-2 over St. Olaf and 10-2 against River Falls. Next on the schedule for the 15-1 Gusties was a two-game series in Houghton, Michigan against Division I Northern Michigan the weekend of February 4-5. It was not uncommon during this era for top level DIII teams to play DI teams.

The following season Gustavus hosted Boston College and played a two-game series against Lake Superior State in Sault St. Marie, Michigan. In 76-77 Northern Michigan was a new team in DI hockey. The roster was made up almost entirely of Canadiens, the majority of whom were 20-year old freshmen coming off several years of junior hockey. Within a couple years they would be playing in the NCAA championship game.

Five thousand spectators filled the stands for the first game on Friday night, February 4. The ice arena had turned into a gladiator pit. The physical play often turned violent. Twenty penalties combined were handed out by the referees. Gustavus players sent to the box were spit on by fans and berated for wasting their scholarship in the penalty box. There was nothing to be gained by pointing out none of the Gustavus players were on hockey scholarships. The final score was a 6-6 tie but Gustavus paid a heavy price. Senior Tom "Bomber" Lindsey sustained a season-ending knee injury. Co-captain Brian Parr suffered a concussion

which caused him to forget where he was. He still managed a couple more shifts before he forgot who he was and was done for the weekend. Mark Weber sustained a shoulder injury which also took him out of the next evening's game. Down three skaters, two defensemen, Gustavus played strong and tough, trailing only 4-3 after two periods and ultimately losing 7-4 when Northern Michigan scored three power play goals in the last ten minutes on four straight penalties called against Gustavus. Bruised and battered, yet unbroken from the weekend, the Gustavus players solidified their bond that had begun in Sweden over Christmas. They had become a team in its finest form and this would define the rest of the 1976-77 season.

It took the team, three players down after the Northern Michigan weekend, one game, a 6-1 loss to St. Thomas, to heal. In the final six games leading up to the national tournament Gustavus ran the table; 6-3 over Saint John's, 7-2 over St. Olaf, 3-2 over Mankato State, 8-5 and 5-2 over Concordia, and 11-2 over Hamline. In doing so Gustavus again was the MIAC champion at 12-2, a final regular season record of 21-3-1. And now on to the NAIA national tournament in Superior, Wisconsin, February 25-27.

A-12—The Mining Journal, Marquette, Mich., Saturday, February 5, 1977

NMU, Gustavus Adolphus tie, 6-6

By EVE LEWIS
Journal Staff Writer

Gustavus Adolphus' Golden Gusties started playing catch-up hockey in the opening minutes of the second period against Northern Michigan University last night and with less than five minutes left in regulation time, they accomplished that feat, knotting the score at 6-6. At the end of two five-minute overtime periods, the game remained deadlocked after an end-to-end battle before a charged-up crowd of 1,551 at Lakeview Arena who viewed the non-conference tilt.

Both teams square off again tonight at 7:30 in Lakeview Arena. The St. Peter, Minn., team drew first blood when left wing Jim Williams' shot from the center of the left circle sailed past Wildcat netminder Barrie Oakes, with three-quarters of the initial period elapsed.

Northern made up the one-goal deficit two minutes later when Ed Dobbs took a pass from Dann McKeeraghan and tied the score, 1-1, before the period ended.

Wildcat defenseman Don Waddell opened the second period scoring—the first of a trio of goals for him last night—from the slot on a pass from Ike at 5:36.

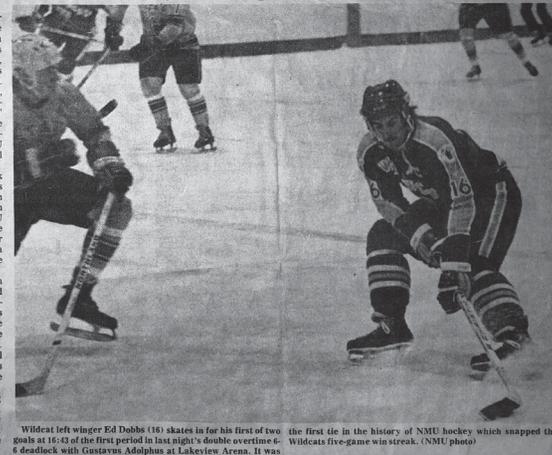
Tim Bohan came back for the Gusties less than a minute later to put his team within a goal of NMU. The Wildcats went ahead when Waddell, aided by Bill Joyce and Denis Flanagan made the score, 3-2. Midway through the period, Dobbs flipped the puck between the post and the Gusties' netminder, Brad Austin, while the Wildcats were short-handed to give the NMU "Green Machine" a two-goal cushion.

Tom Lindsay charged back for another Gustavus Adolphus tally while both teams were playing a man short. Tim Vince of NMU scored his third goal of the season nearly a minute later to bring the Wildcats back to a two-goal edge at the end of the second stanza.

The Gusties cut the margin to 5-4 when Mike Cody tallied at 5:46, but Waddell completed his hat trick on assists from Bob Young and Dave Guertin and the Wildcats were on the long end of a 6-4 count.

At the midpoint of the final period, Gustavus Adolphus rallied for two goals to tie the game.

The Gusties, defending champions of the Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Association, now own a 15-1-1 record, while the Wildcats are 14-11-1.



Wildcat left winger Ed Dobbs (16) skates in for his first of two goals at 16:43 of the first period in last night's double overtime 6-6 deadlock with Gustavus Adolphus at Lakeview Arena. It was the first tie in the history of NMU hockey which snapped the Wildcats five-game win streak. (NMU photo)

PERIOD 3

THE NAIA TOURNAMENT

No strangers to the tourney

The National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics, the NAIA, first sponsored a men's national ice hockey championship in 1968 and ran the tourney until 1984 when small college hockey joined the NCAA and a Division III National Championship was created. Initially a four-team tourney, the NAIA expanded to six teams in 1974, then eight in 1975.

Gustavus had competed in every one of the previous nine tournaments. Twice it made it to the championship game and both times were overwhelmed, 9-3 to Lake Superior State in 1972 and 7-1 to St. Scholastica in 1975. There were eight teams competing in the 1977 tournament in Superior. In one bracket, the number one seed Bemidji State, St. Francis (Maine), St. Scholastica, and Wisconsin-River Falls. In the other bracket, number two seed Gustavus, Ferris State, Augsburg, and Wisconsin-Superior.

Gustavus Lineup for 1977 National Tournament

Forwards: Hansen, Cody, Williams

Rutt, Kunz, Coombe

Miller, Loken, Bohan

Halden, McCormick, Perlich (who also was the seventh defense)

Defense: Parr, Weber

Edwards, Horecka

Howells, Middlebrook

Goalies: Austin

Kittay

In the quarterfinal, Gustavus, led by Mike Cody's hat trick and two goals from Doug Coombe, steamrolled a big and aggressive Ferris State team 10-3. Other quarterfinal winners were Augsburg over Superior 4-3, Bemidji State over St. Francis 11-0, and St. Scholastica over River Falls 6-4.

Gustavus's semifinal opponent was its MIAC rival and co-champion Augsburg. The teams had split their two regular season contests. The game was considered a toss-up. Dave Kunz of Gustavus scored the first goal 17 minutes into the game, but Augsburg scored two goals in the final minute to take a 2-1 lead after one period.

At 6:30 of the second period, Augsburg went ahead 3-1. Gustavus's season and its shot at the national title was in jeopardy. Yet there was no panic from the players or the coaches. At 10:26 of the second period Mike Cody scored to make it 3-2 Augsburg, which is how the second period ended. In the Gustavus locker room between the second and third period was almost complete certainty that they would win the game. This was a confidence each of the players had in themselves and in their teammates. This Gustavus team was not only a culmination of a successful season which included Sweden and the gladiator pit of Northern Michigan. This team was the culmination of 12 years of dominant Gustavus hockey, ready to achieve what no Gustavus team had previously done. Win the national championship. But first they had to erase the one goal deficit.

Gustavus also had another, not so secret, weapon they could rely on in making the comeback; its fans. The annual trek to the NAIA tournament was the yearly highlight for hundreds of Gustavus students. Students in large numbers had been following Gustavus to its away games since the mid-60s. When Lund Arena was completed there was a separate section where they stood, emphatically and loudly cheering on their team. The Gustie students had already made their presence known during the first two periods of the Augsburg game and the previous game against Ferris State. As the Gustavus players left their locker room they were met by the students, who had formed a tunnel of cheering, encouragement, high fives, and back slapping all the way to

the ice. And it worked. The players' confidence and unity. The overwhelming support of the Gustavus students. More powerful than magic. Gustavus scored three goals in the third period. Two by Dave Kunz at 8:23 and 11:48 for a hat trick. The fifth and final Gustavus goal by Paul Rutt at 15:52. Final score 5-3 Gustavus. Augsburg defeated. On to the championship game against St. Scholastica, a 4-2 victor over Bemidji State.

Although St. Scholastica and Gustavus had first met on the ice only two years previous in the 1975 NAIA Championship they already had a rivalry in place. Actually, more than a rivalry. They had a history with one another. They did not like each other. St. Scholastica won that first game 7-1. The two teams met again during the 1975-76 regular season with Gustavus prevailing 5-4. In the 1976 NAIA semifinals, St. Scholastica won 6-5 in overtime. In November 1976, at the Thanksgiving tourney in Columbia Heights, the two teams met for the fourth time. Gustavus won 4-2, but there were 16 penalties called in the third period alone. Four major misconducts were called and two players ejected from the game, including one St. Scholastica player for breaking his stick over sophomore defenseman Chris Middlebrook's head.

The root of the rivalry was more than two competitive teams vying for supremacy. A review of the rosters, the players who made up each team and where they came from, helps explain. St. Scholastica drew its players from Canada and the north shore of Lake Superior. The Saints' 76-77 roster included six Canadians, with the vast majority of the rest coming from Duluth, Cloquet, Silver Bay, Two Harbors, and Superior. Only one player on their roster did not come from Canada or the north shore. Gustavus in contrast rostered only three players from northern Minnesota, from Duluth, Virginia and Roseau. Other than two players from Owatonna and one from Madison the rest were from the Twin Cities, including four skaters from Minneapolis high schools.

The Game to Decide It All

So, on Sunday, February 27, 1977, Gustavus and St. Scholastica, the south versus the north, met for the NAIA National Championship. Refereeing the game were two officials from the Iron Range of Minnesota, Grand Rapids, and Roseau. In the stands were the Gustavus fans, students, and alumni, estimated at 400 strong by the City of Superior police officers working the game. The game was televised by a Duluth station. A radio broadcast was sent over the airwaves all the way to Saint Peter and the Gustavus campus.

The Gustavus players and coaches were ready. This was their year. The national championship was their destiny. It would also be a culmination of over 11 years of excellence and accomplishment for the Gustavus hockey program. It would take more than an accomplished sportswriter to describe the intensity and beauty of this national championship game. Even a wordsmith, poet laureate, would have difficulty doing so, particularly if they had never competed themselves in such a high stakes final showdown.

At 16:58 of the first period Madill scores the first goal of the game, 1-0 St. Scholastica. Shots on goal are 13 St. Scholastica and 10 Gustavus. The second period comes and Gustavus scores twice, Steve Hansen at 10:58 and Paul Rutt at 12:39. 2-1 Gustavus after two periods. Shots on goal in the second period, 20 for Gustavus and 15 for St. Scholastica. And then the third period. But the third period, and in particular the final 35 seconds of the game, deserves its own paragraph. If this were a book instead of an article it would deserve its own chapter. It is, after all, a recounting of an improbable, bordering on unbelievable, ending to a game and a season and a dismantling of the beauty of destiny that drives home the stunning reality that in a contest between fate and destiny, fate will win out.

Gustavus, with its 2-1 lead, dominates the third period. St. Scholastica, on the brink of collapse, is saved again and again, literally and figuratively, by goaltender Bill Courchaine. He will make 46 saves overall. The score remains 2-1 Gustavus late into the game. And then it is tied as Gilbertson scores for St. Scholastica at 15:34 of the period. The game is now 2-2 with four and a half

minutes remaining. An entire season and nine years of Gustavus striving for a national championship, comes down to minutes remaining on a game clock.

Gustavus kills another penalty and then at 17:44 a St. Scholastica player is given two minutes for tripping. On the power play for Gustavus is the number one extra man unit in the country; forwards Steve Hansen, Mike Cody, and Jim Williams, backed by defensemen Brian Parr and Mark Weber. With just over 30 seconds left in the game, 16 seconds left on the power play, there is a scramble for a rebound in front of the St. Scholastica goal. The puck comes to Steve Hansen and he shoots. The puck goes under goaltender Courchaine and comes out the other side one foot from the goal line. The puck never stops. It never comes to rest. It is never covered by the goalie. Jim Williams pushes the puck into the wide open goal. He has scored the game-winning goal. The goal which wins the national championship for Gustavus. Its first ever. The Gustavus hockey team, the players, the coaches, have achieved their destiny.

On the ice the five Gusties leap into each other's arms in the corner to the left of the St. Scholastica goal. Gustie goalie Brad Austin, tethered to the ice only by the weight of his pads, throws his arms into the air as he ice dances in front of his goal. On the Gustavus bench, players and coaches embrace one another, yelling at the top of their lungs "We did it, we did it!" It is only then that they see one of the referees, the one who had been standing in the corner to the right of the net, waving the goal off. Although the puck had never stopped moving and was never covered he had lost sight of it and had blown his whistle just as Williams was shooting the puck into the St. Scholastica goal. Although the game was televised live by a Duluth station there was no video replay in college hockey in 1977. The call stands. The goal which had won Gustavus the national championship is disallowed.

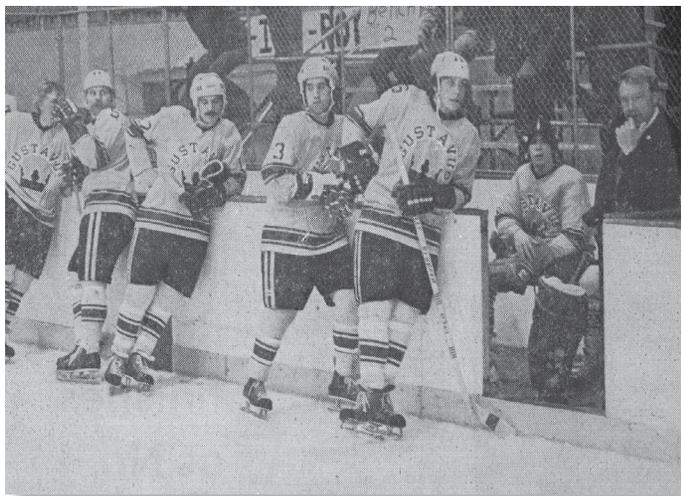
In 1977 there are also no timeouts. Instead there is a face off to the right of the St. Scholastica goal, the side where the referee was standing when he lost sight of the puck and blew his whistle. There are 30 seconds left in regulation and 14 seconds on the Gustavus power play. They can still win the game in regulation or

in overtime. But neither potential is how this game will end. Off the faceoff, the puck goes back to the Gustavus point where as if directed by the hand of God takes a hop over the defenseman's stick. There is a semi breakaway by St. Scholastica forward Beck. He is caught in the Gustavus zone at the top of the circle by the other Gustavus defense. Beck shoots and the save is made. But there is a rebound and with 20 seconds left in the championship game Beck puts his own rebound into the Gustavus goal. In the span of ten seconds St. Scholastica has gone from runner up to national champion. Gustavus has gone from national champion to instead a stunning defeat, without question or argument ranking first, not only in the history of Gustavus athletics, but also in the annals of college hockey.

Minutes later, the St. Scholastica players parade around the ice holding in arms outstretched above their heads the NAIA national championship trophy. They are ecstatic, not only at being champions, but on the emotional roller coaster high, the top of the ride, when only minutes before their ride had bottomed out and was over. The Gustavus players and coaches meanwhile stood leaning on the boards or sitting on their bench, watching the celebration, but not fully comprehending how it was not they, in the complete rapture of ultimate victory, who were skating around the ice, embracing the trophy and the national championship. Not comprehending how it was not they who had achieved their destiny as a team.

After the game, while still at the arena, coach Don Roberts is interviewed, but only after he has watched the tape of the disallowed goal. Roberts voices what both teams and the entire crowd at the arena already knew. The puck was never covered or frozen. It was still moving in the crease when Jim Williams shot it into the St. Scholastica goal. When informed that the referee who blew the whistle disallowing the goal was quoted explaining, "What could I do? It looked to me like it was under his glove (St. Scholastica goaltender Courchaine)", Roberts stated "It was a judgment call and the referee said he didn't see the puck, so he didn't. But it certainly decided the national championship." More to the point was what a St. Scholastica player, a high school teammate of Gustie defenseman Brian Parr, told him in

the handshake line, “You were robbed.” One of the 400 strong Gustavus supporters, when leaving the arena, came to his own conclusion of what had happened. “I looked around me at 400 Gustie students and alumni, some who had been semi intoxicated and all who were extremely loud and boisterous in their support of their team. Then I considered the 13 nuns from St. Scholastica who were at the game. It occurred to me that God must have decided that St. Scholastica would win the game. I had no other explanation that made any sense.”



43 Years Later

Forty-three years have passed since the 1977 NAIA championship ice hockey game. In these four-plus decades Gustavus has yet to win a national title in men's hockey, and have only reached a national championship game one further time, the NCAA Division III title game in 2009. All the Gustavus players from that 76-77 season are still here, still alive, together with Asst. Coach Mike Kemp, team manager Ray Lewis, and Sports Information Director Bob Greenberg.

Only the Head Coach, Don Roberts has passed, in 2016, but not before receiving the John MacInnes Award from the American Hockey Coaches Association in 1993 and the Hobey Baker Legends of College Hockey Award in 2009. He coached Gustavus hockey from 1964 to 1997. At retirement, he was the all-time winningest college hockey coach with 532 wins, 290 losses and 25 ties. The only thing missing from his extraordinary career was a national championship.

There were four seniors on the 76-77 team, captains Bruce Edwards and Brian Parr, Craig Miller and Tom Lindsey. Edwards was named to the All-America team in 1977 together with junior Steve Hansen. In 1978, Hansen, Mike Cody, and Mark Weber were All-Americans. In 1979, Dave Kunz. But the national championship games for these Gustavus players were no more. In the 1978 NAIA tourney they lose 6-5 to St. Thomas in overtime. In the 1979 NAIA tourney a 3-2 loss in overtime to River Falls.

From the 1979-80 season, no players remain from the 76-77 team. The players on coach Roberts' 76-77 team are all in their 60s now, as is Asst. Coach Mike Kemp, Bob Greenberg, and Ray Lewis.

In the spring of 2020, the members of the team talk about their memories from that season and in particular the final moments of the championship game. They talk about whether that game and how it ended has impacted them, how they have taken it with them, over the past 43 years. They also talk about the lives they have lived since leaving Gustavus, their careers, their families. The members of the 76-77 team have universally been an exceptional group, not only when measured by career and financial success, but

also by leading complete and worthy lives. A doctor, two dentists, a lawyer, a CEO of an international company, a president of a major US business, insurance executives, business owners, entrepreneurs, financial planners, athletic directors. Many, in fact the majority, had children who became hockey players, whom they coached.

They coached in hockey programs in Alaska (Mark Weber), Colorado (Doug Coombe), Ohio (Bruce Edwards), Nashville (Dan Horecka), Madison (Stu McCormick), Duluth (Steve Hansen), St. Cloud (Craig Miller), Roseville (Mike Cody), Eden Prairie (Warren Loken), Lakeville (Paul Rutt), Minneapolis (Chris Middlebrook), Mound/Orono (Steve Howells), Bloomington Jefferson (Keith Hedlund). Assistant Coach Mike Kemp moves to Wisconsin where he coaches the Badgers under Bob Johnson, winning a national championship in 1990. He then becomes the coach of DI University of Nebraska, Omaha and ultimately their Athletic Director. Doug Coombe joins him at Wisconsin as JV coach and graduate assistant for Wisconsin and then plays hockey in Europe for two seasons. Mark Weber becomes a national senior hockey champion and a DI hockey referee. Brian Parr plays a year in Sweden for Gota. Chris Middlebrook and Chris Halden become bandy players when the sport is introduced into the U.S. in 1980, playing for Swedish teams and competing in multiple world championships. All are Gustavus proud and Gustavus should be proud of the men that all of them became.

The entire team, without exception, remembers the disallowed goal the same. Whether on the ice, watching from the bench, from the stands or up in the press box, the memory is unanimous that the puck was never frozen, had never even been covered, when Jim Williams shot it into the St. Scholastica goal. Not a single member of the team heard the referee blow his whistle calling the play dead as Williams was scoring the winning goal.

When asked about the St. Scholastica goal off the following face-off that wins the game there is no consensus as to what happened. The first six players and Mike Kemp, when interviewed, have seven different versions of what happened. Many players cannot recall anything but seeing the puck go in to the Gustavus goal. Although the inability of Gustavus to have a shared memory of what happened on the final goal likely has an explanation in psychology, how the goal occurred, how it was scored, has no relevance or meaning. All that matters is that the puck went into the Gustavus goal. They recall standing in front of or sitting on the Gustavus bench watching in disbelief as St. Scholastica receives the national championship trophy and parades around the ice with it. They have no recollection of that evening or the Monday morning trip back to Saint Peter and Gustavus.

HOCKEY PERSONNEL NAIA Tournament - CHAMPIONSHIP

Team GAC

Team St. Scholastica

NO.	STARTING LINE-UP	PERIOD PLAYED			SHOT RECORD			TOTAL
		1	2	3	1	2	3	
1	Brad Austin							
7	Mark Weber							
4	Brian Parr							
17	Steve Hansen							
12	Jim Williams							
13	Mike Corby							

Goal _____
Lt. Defense _____
Rt. Defense _____
Center _____
Lt. Wing _____
Rt. Wing _____

NO.	STARTING LINE-UP	PERIOD PLAYED			SHOT RECORD			TOTAL
		1	2	3	1	2	3	
30	Bill Courchaine							
20	Paul Ostoff							
26	Pandy Norgard							
11	Gary Beck							
7	Andy Spoke							
23	Mark Krysiak							

NO.	SPARES	POSITION	PERIOD PLAYED			SHOT RECORD			TOTAL
			1	2	3	1	2	3	
2	Stu McCormick								
3	Chris Middlebrook								
5	Brad Perlich								
6	Dan Horecka								
8	Craig Miller								
9	Chris Halden								
10	Dave Kuz								
11	Bruce Stewart								
14	Raul Rutt								
15	Tim Bohan								
16	Doug Coombe								
22	Steve Howells								
25	Warren Loken								
30	Steve Kittay								

NO.	SPARES	POSITION	PERIOD PLAYED			SHOT RECORD			TOTAL
			1	2	3	1	2	3	
4	Jeff Couture								
6	Keith Gilbertson								
8	Keith O'Brien								
9	Greg Madill								
10	Dale Johnson								
12	Gregg Stanley								
14	Rick McKelvie								
15	Lloyd Puhalski								
17	Todd Henneman								
18	Paul Belobaba								
19	Dennis Roy								
21	Mike Castonguay								
23	Jon Olson								
1	Warren Carlson								

OFFICIALS

GAME REMARKS

Referee _____
Ass't. Referee _____
Linesmen _____
Linesmen _____
Timer _____
Ass't. Timer _____
Penalty Timer _____
Goal Judge _____
Goal Judge _____
Scorer _____ Announcer _____
Coach _____ Manager _____

Rink [] Rink []

Band _____
Band Director _____
Date _____
Place _____
Rink _____

SCORING RECORD

NAIA

TEAM GAC (2)
TEAM St. Scholastica (3)

SCORING - 1st Period				PENALTIES - 1st Period				
Team	Scorer	Ass't.	Time of Score	Team	Name	Penalty	Minutes	Time of Penalty
St. S.	(9) Madill	(6) Puhalski	16:58	St. S.	(22) Krysiak	Trip	X	4:08
		(19) Roy		St. S.	(26) Norgard	Trip	X	11:42
				GAC	(12) Williams	Trip	X	12:41

SCORING - 2nd Period				PENALTIES - 2nd Period				
Team	Scorer	Ass't.	Time of Score	Team	Name	Penalty	Minutes	Time of Penalty
GAC	(17) Hanson		10:58	St. S.	(23) Gilbertson	Trip	X	6:53
GAC	(14) Rutt	(4) Horecka	12:39	St. S.	(20) Castonguay	holding	X	8:53
		(4) Edwards		St. S.	(20) Johnson	Trip	X	11:55
				GAC	(4) Parr	holding	X	12:56
				GAC	(5) Perlich	trip	X	13:30

SCORING - 3rd Period				PENALTIES - 3rd Period				
Team	Scorer	Ass't.	Time of Score	Team	Name	Penalty	Minutes	Time of Penalty
St. S.	(6) Gilbertson	(15) Puhalski	15:34	St. S.	(23) Olson	hooking	X	6:37
St. S.	(11) Beck		19:40	GAC	(15) Bohan	hooking	X	6:37
				GAC	(7) Weber	trip	X	13:34
				GAC	(3) Middlebrook	inter.	X	15:53
				St. S.	(12) Stanley	trip	X	17:44

SCORING - OVER TIME				PENALTIES - OVER TIME					
Team	Per.	Scorer	Ass't.	Time of Score	Team	Name	Penalty	Minutes	Time of Penalty

----- SAVES -----

Goalie	Team	Per.	Stops	Total
		1.	12	
		2.	15	27
		3.	9	
		O.T.		
				56

Goalie	Team	Per.	Stops	Total
		1.	10	
		2.	18	28
		3.	18	
		O.T.		
				46

SHOTS ON GOAL (AGAINST)	1.	2.	3.	O.T.	Total

SHOTS ON GOAL (AGAINST)	1.	2.	3.	O.T.	Total

OVERTIME

Player Reactions

In the early spring of 2020 the players, Coach Mike Kemp, Bob Greenberg, Ray Lewis, talk about the 76-77 season, the championship game and its final 30 seconds. The emotions they experienced 43 years ago and their feelings here in the present:

Mike Kemp, assistant coach who went on to coach DI hockey, winning a national championship at Wisconsin and establishing the powerful University of Nebraska Omaha hockey program: “Of the 1500 plus games I coached in my career there are only a couple that I vividly remember. The championship with Wisconsin of course, a fantastic memory. But this Gustavus game was the most devastating of all. Regardless of whether the record book reflects it, this was a championship team”

Bruce Edwards, senior and co-captain: “Gustavus always won. But that year was special. That team was special. The turn of events at the end of the championship game was both dramatic and devastating. At a young age we all learned that you make the most of every opportunity because you don’t get a second shot, things don’t always go the way they should.”

Brian Parr, senior and co-captain: “The loss is a dark place in my memories. I still have nightmares about how that game ended. I have used it as a motivation for everything I have done in my life.”

Jim Williams, junior who scored the disallowed goal: “The puck was never covered, never frozen. It really was a valid goal. It is disappointing that of all the goals the team scored or that I scored in my career the one that mattered the most was the one that was taken away.”

Mike Cody, junior: “It was a powerful life lesson at an early age. You can do everything correct and you think you have the deal done and then it is taken away from you. We thought it was our destiny to be the champions but it was not meant to be.”

Steve Hansen, junior: “The 76-77 team was the best I ever played on. And that season was the best hockey experience I ever had, even with how it ended. I am reminded on a regular basis how it ended because my son now plays for St. Scholastica and I have to look at their 1977 national champion banner hanging in Mars Arena.”

Craig Miller, senior: “The sun comes up the next day even if you aren’t able to see it. You have to keep moving forward. Resilience. Even when life is unfair. I applied this to my life and taught my children this lesson.”

Brad Austin, junior goalie: “This was the best team I ever played on. Exceptional players and exceptional chemistry. That loss was definitely the agony of defeat. I used that game in my business career, when giving presentations, to emphasize that life is not always just or fair but that you learn from it and use it as a motivator.”

Mark Weber, junior: “If anyone wants to tell me their hard luck/bad break sports story they can never top the heartbreaking ending to that championship game. The devastation of that loss became a powerful motivator for me in everything I did in life and in sports. I refed DI hockey for a number of years and ran clinics. Every clinic I taught I emphasized how important proper positioning for the referee was around the goal to avoid losing sight of the puck and blowing the whistle when it shouldn’t be blown.”

Waren Loken, junior: “The victory was ours but it was taken from us. Unfortunately we can’t get it back. There was no second chance.”

Chris Halden, junior: “This was an extraordinary team and season and I am proud to have been a part of it. I watched the movie Miracle and Herb Brooks telling his players before the third period against Finland, ‘You lose this game and you’ll take it to your graves.’ We lost the national championship when we had already won it. I will take that to my grave.”

Stu McCormick, junior: “Maybe in movies, or in bad stories, games end the way that one did, but they are not supposed to in real life.”

Paul Rutt, sophomore: “I was only a sophomore. At the time I thought we have two more years to win the national championship and that we will do it. That didn’t happen. The disappointment of that loss was never rectified.”

Dan Horecka, sophomore: “Yes, it is all in the past and we all moved on and have lived wonderful lives. I did not and we did not carry that loss with us as baggage. But knowing that we had the chance to be national champions? That we came so close?”

Chris Middlebrook, sophomore: “For me it would have been different if we lost that game in a conventional manner. It would have been disappointing but it would not have left the void of unfinished business that can never be finished.”

Brad Perlich, sophomore, who after the 76-77 season had open heart surgery, refers to the defeat without any irony as a heart breaker.

Steve Howells, sophomore “I am pretty good at getting over things, moving past disappointments, but that loss will always be an unfortunate memory.”

Bob Greenberg, Sports Information Director: “Gustavus not only won the game with that goal, they deserved to win. A horrible break. A random act of God. Forty-three years later and I am still stunned.”

One thing each of the members of the team agree upon is the disappointment they felt and continue to feel for coach Don Roberts. He had a Hall of Fame coaching career but there is no “National Championship” on his merit list. They know that there should be. Their shared feelings for coach Roberts matters more to the members of the team than their own personal sense of loss and disappointment.

For many years coach Roberts ran a Christian summer hockey camp in Grand Rapids. Some of his players from the 76-77 team sent their kids to the camp and one of the players volunteered at the camp when his kids were there. He and coach Roberts were at a local tavern one night when the referee who had lost sight of the puck in the championship game was also there. He spoke to coach Roberts and apologized for blowing the call in that game and costing coach Roberts, his players and Gustavus the national championship. Coach Roberts, who taught his teams to win with dignity and honor, and also to lose with dignity and honor, thanked the referee for saying this, and then proceeded to, as a friend, drink a beer with him.

Coach Don Roberts is a Hall of Famer, not just as a hockey coach but also as a person. In 2016 the entire St. Scholastica team of 1976-77 was inducted into the St. Scholastica Athletic Hall of Fame for winning the national championship. Even the referee who lost sight of the puck in the 1977 championship game but had a decades-long career as an outstanding referee, is a Hall of Fame member. The Gustavus men’s hockey team of 1976-77, however, and the national championship they won, but then didn’t, has been forgotten. They shouldn’t be.

PAGE EIGHT
 Second Time In Three Years

by Dave Wright

LET'S PLAY HOCKEY

ST. SCHOLASTICA OF DULUTH

WINS NAIA TROPHY

SUPERIOR — Call them the Oakland A's of the NAIA. Call them flamboyant, Call them winners. The "them" is St. Scholastica, which won their second NAIA title here last Sunday, with a dramatic 3-2 win over Gustavus on Gary Beck's shorthanded goal with 20 seconds to play in the third period.

For coach Max Ramsland's crew, the win marked a remarkable comeback. Just nine days before, it appeared the Saints would not be in the tourney when they lost a 1-0 game to Bemidji State. To qualify for the tourney, the Saints had to beat the Beavers and then hope Lakehead lost twice to UW-Superior.

The Saints did beat the Beavers, 6-5, in overtime. Here's how an amazed Ramsland described it: "We were down 5-4 in the last minute and I pulled the goalie. We got a power play goal and went into overtime. I knew a tie did us no good. In the last minute of overtime, I waved our goalie to the bench, but as he was coming off the ice, Andy Speak scored and we won, 6-5." Still, it took a double win by UW-Superior to get the Saints into the tourney.

Once in, the Saints had to rally from behind in all three games to win the title.

In the first round, MIAC co-champ, Gustavus, met Ferris State (Mich.). It was a little tougher than last year's opener for the Gusties. (They beat a Maine team, 22-1.) The Bulldogs held with the Gusties for 30 minutes and trailed only 4-3 midway through the game. In the end, however, it was 10-3 as Mike Cody scored a hat trick and Jim Williams and Doug Coombe added a pair each.

ICHA champ Bemidji State met St. Francis (Maine) in the second game of the first day. The number-one seeded Beavers had no trouble with the Red Knights, rolling to an 11-0 win. "We played everybody we could," said an almost apologetic Beaver coach Bob Peters. Asked whether a game like this did any good, Peters smiled, but did not comment.

In the first game of the evening session, St. Scholastica spotted River Falls a 2-0 lead, but rallied for a 6-4 win. Falcon goalie Kurt Welch made 50 stops, but Keith Gilbertson and Speak scored twice in the win. Still, the game was not decided until Gregg Stanley hit the empty net in the final minute. "Our kids just didn't have it," said Falcon coach Don Josephs.

Augsburg then met UW-Superior in the first round. The defending NAIA champs grabbed a 2-0 lead in the first period, but the Auggies tied the game on a pair by Mark Lewis. Paul Hughes gave the MIAC co-champs a 3-2 lead, but Dave Selissen's power play goal with goalie Mike Heinsen with 35 seconds to play forced overtime. In that overtime, the Auggies outshot Superior, 5-0, and won the game at 1:52 on Jeff Blake's goal.

The set up an ICHA and MIAC semifinal. Bemidji State and the Saints went at it hammer and tong. The Beavers grabbed a 2-0 lead on first period goals by John Murphy and Steve Seide. Hometown boy Gilbertson halved the lead and Lloyd Puhalski tied the game after a period, Speak untied on a power play and Mike Castonguay's individual effort in the final period closed out the Beavers. Once beaten, the Beavers tried to win with their fists, but the Saints survived and went to their third final in a row.

As rough as the Beavers and the Saints were, Gustavus-Augsburg seemed mild on comparison. Both sides skated well and it took three goals by Dave Kunz to give the Gusties a 5-3 win. Kunz got the game's first tally at 16:59 of the first period, but Lewis and Steve Nelson reversed the lead in the final minutes of the period.

In the middle period, each side traded a goal. Kunz went back to work in the final period, tying the game at 8:23 and untying it for good at 11:48. Paul Rutt's goal after the only Auggie penalty of the night set the stage for the finals.

When Stanley took a penalty at 17:44, it appeared it would be either a Gustavus win in regulation time or overtime.

Neither occurred. The Gusties thought they had one when they poked the puck past Courchaine with 30 seconds left, but referee John Bymark said he had blown the play dead. "I lost sight of the puck and blew the play dead," he explained to one reporter later.

Perhaps still grieving over their misfortune, still Gusties allowed the puck to go to mid-ice unmolested and Beck sailed in all alone and beat Austin High sending Wessman Arena into delirium.

Courchaine stopped one more shot (he stopped 45 in all) and the Saints had their title. Courchaine was named MVP of the tourney for his efforts.

For the Saints, it was a triumph over misfortune in a year of non-harmony. Rookie coach Ramsland had a hard time controlling his charges and six players sat out a game in Bemidji for missing a curfew. One of his leading scorers, Buzzy LaFond, was kicked off the playing roster after a series of incidents. Ramsland himself seemed stunned by the whole thing. "Helluva game," he kept saying later. The Saints finished the year 17-13-1.

For Robert's Gusties, they were 23-4-1 in a year that included a trip to Sweden and a co-title in the MIAC. But it was the third time Gustavus had lost in the title game and the way it happened made it hurt all the more.

In the consolation game, Jeff Arf scored twice in the final period as Bemidji rallied from a 2-2 tie for a 5-2 win. It reversed what happened to the Beavers last year when Gustavus beat them for third place by a 5-4 margin. It was the second time in three years that Augsburg finished fourth in the NAIA tourney.

RICHFIELD'S STEVE HANSEN SETS NEW GUSTAVUS GOAL-ASSIST RECORD

ST. PETER, MN — Steve Hansen, junior center iceman from Richfield, has set a new Gustavus hockey scoring record. His three goals in last Tuesday's 11-3 victory over Hamline gave him 26 goals and 32 assists for 58 points in 25 games this season breaking the previous single season scoring mark of 56 points, set twice by former All-American Gary Hansen of Robbinsdale.

In his nearly three seasons at Gustavus, Steve has tallied 70 goals and 81 assists for 151 points. As a freshman, he had 24 goals and 45 points and, as a sophomore, he scored 20 goals and 48 points. The career record is held by Gary Hansen, with 121 goals and 206 points in four years.

Steve centers Gustavus' "Goal" line. Rightwinger Mike Cody (Jr-Alexander Ramsey) has 22 goals and 54 points this year and leftwinger Jim Williams (Jr-Minnetonka) has 28 goals and 52 points.

Honors already received include being named to last year's All-MIAC squad and to this year's Louisville Slugger Thanksgiving Classic All-Tournament team. He is the son of Richard and Verona Hansen of 7234 Clinton in Richfield.



1—B. Austin



2—S. McCormick



3—C. Middlebrook



4—B. Parr



5—B. Perlich



6—D. Horecka



7—M. Weber



8—C. Miller



9—C. Halden



10—D. Kunz



11—B. Edwards



12—J. Williams



13—M. Cody



14—P. Rutt



15—T. Bohan



16—D. Coombe



17—S. Hansen



18—K. Hedlund



20—T. Lindsey



21—D. Gunderson



22—S. Howells



25—W. Loken



30—S. Kittay



Man.: R. Lewis





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