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Sports > Preps

## Fired-up Titans skate past Crusaders, 6-4

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By Fred Costello, Special to The Macomb Daily

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This was not your typical divisional rivalry game.

The fact that the Stevenson boys ice hockey team skated away with a 6-4 win over L'Anse Creuse North on Friday night was not nearly as surprising as the ease with which the Titans handled its Macomb Area Conference White Division opponent.

From the drop of the first puck at Fraser's Great Lakes Sports City, Stevenson came out with a fire and intensity that helped them build a commanding 4-1 lead after the first period. Crusaders coach Chris Rojem couldn't believe what he saw.

"They weren't ready to play the game," Rojem said. "There were preparation issues and those issues relayed out on the ice in the first period. If we were ready to play the game the way we should, it would've been a totally different outcome, I believe."

The Titans improved to 2-0-1 in the White and 7-3-1 overall. Meanwhile, LCN dropped to 4-1 in the division and 10-4 overall. The teams meet again on Jan. 18 at Mount Clemens.

"It was a good effort all the way around," Stevenson coach Al Korolewicz said. "We were ready to play. We told them that the winner of this game will control their destiny in the division. I believe no one's going undefeated in the league because this league is too close."

Senior forward Ryan Belfy converted a beautiful cross-ice feed from Dan Dougherty to open the scoring. Less than a minute later, the Titans struck again - this time it was junior forward Taylor Wiess who rifled a beautifully-placed shot past goalie Alex

Sypniewski.

The Crusaders responded quickly, however, when senior forward Chris Davis slammed home a goal exactly 30 seconds later to cut the Stevenson lead.

The top line for the Titans, consisting of Justin Zyvon, Drew DeMarti and Nick Gregorich, controlled much of the pace offensively and did some major damage before the first 15 minutes were up.

DeMarti tucked home a Zyvon rebound at the five-minute mark for a 3-1 lead. With 30 seconds to go in the first, it was DeMarti setting up Zyvon for the 4-1 advantage.

To its credit, LCN was able to mount somewhat of a comeback in the third - even after a terrible beginning. Rojem replaced Sypniewski with Brian Ellis after the first period. Ellis played well, but got caught looking the wrong direction in the opening minute of the third when Dougherty put the puck in for an easy goal and 6-2 lead.

But a nice passing play by Ian Gramer set up a goal by senior forward Derek Drop, who was positioned in front of the Stevenson goal.

Less than a minute later, senior forward Nick West went in alone and fired the puck home on a shorthanded breakaway, cutting the deficit to 6-4 with 11:29 left in the game.

Unfortunately for the Crusaders, it was the last time they would find the back of the net - despite outshooting the Titans 11-3 in the final period.

L'Anse Creuse North finished the game with 28 shots, while Stevenson took 26.

The teams traded goals in an evenly-matched second period.

Belfy netted a power play marker for Stevenson, with Zyvon and DeMarti drawing assists. That tally was answered by Tyler Malin, whose point shot snuck through the pads of goalie Rick Ice.

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