

Ankeny, Annable ready for hockey

By Randy Peterson

Gene Riley, John Annable and at least 20 sponsors have combined their talents and money to bring high school-



JOHN
ANNABLE

level hockey to Ankeny for the first time.

Practices haven't started yet, but the group has joined the newly formed Iowa High School Hockey League, and spirits are high.

"We've got about 20 sponsors at about \$70 each," said Riley, a banker who is general manager of the team.

Annable, a former member of the Des Moines Oak Leafs of the International League, is the coach. "We're just about ready to go. All we have to do is wait until Nov. 7, the date of our first practice," he said.

Ankeny also will be a part of the Des Moines Metro Conference. Its first game will be Nov. 21 against Lincoln. The season will end with the state tournament Mar. 4-6 at Ames' Hilton Coliseum.

Like most other high school hockey teams in Iowa, Ankeny will participate on a club basis. It won't have Iowa High School Athletic Association sanctioning since the high school will not pay for a coach or provide other financial support.

Ankeny will be in Division II of the new 11-member, state-wide league. Others in the division are Lincoln of Des Moines, Mason City, Webster City and Ames.

Division I is comprised of Columbus of Waterloo, Waterloo Public (students from East, West and Central high schools), Sioux City Metro (students from the Sioux City area), Valley of West Des Moines, Dowling, Urbandale and the Hoover-Roosevelt team.

The seven teams from Division I automatically qualify for the state tournament; only the winner qualifies from Division II.

"The Division I schools are the more experienced teams," said Al Murdoch, Iowa State's coach and an organizer of the new league. "The Division II teams are the newer ones."

All of the Des Moines area teams in the league will play home contests at the Des Moines Ice Arena. Mason City will play some of its home games outdoors in Mason City and will play others indoors at Albert Lee, Minn. some 40 miles away.

The Ankeny Hawks probably won't be supported as well as the school's football and basketball teams.

"I know of some teams that are talking about cheerleaders and pep bands," said Riley. "We'll be happy to just get some people in the stands."

Riley said he hopes to have 15 to 25 boys out for the team.

"If we get 40 kids out for the team, I probably will have a coronary," he said. "Then again, if we get only 10, I'll have one, too. We'll just have to wait and see."

"There is a rule this year that a boy cannot play for another hockey team if his school has a hockey team," Riley added. A year ago, some youths from Ankeny played on other Des Moines area teams.

Ankeny expects to draw several players from Grimes and other area communities not having hockey programs.

Riley said the prospective Ankeny players have the highest respect for Annable.

"He's got that big scar from eye to ear," Riley laughed, "and the kids respect that. They know that he knows what he's talking about when it comes to hockey."