

Columbus to start Iowa's first prep hockey team

Columbus High of Waterloo will become the first school in Iowa to field a hockey team when the Sailors start a program next fall.

Columbus Athletic Director John Foens made the announcement Saturday and at the same time named former Waterloo Black Hawk Brian (Duke) Dutkowski as the team's coach.

"We're real excited about the possibilities of the program," said Foens. "We've got permission from the Iowa High School Athletic Assn. and we are already working on a schedule. The only thing we have to settle for sure is ice time with the Auditorium Board."

Foens admitted he took IHSAA Executive Secretary Bernie Saggau "by surprise" when he approached him about the team, especially since the group has no rules governing hockey on a high school level.

But Foens said Saggau gave his permission to follow Minnesota High School rules for the time being. But, even though the rules governing the actual sport will be those of Minnesota, Foens stressed that all eligibility rules for the team will be those of the IHSAA.

INITIALLY, Columbus plans to play a schedule of about 15 games, all against teams from Southern Min-



Duke Dutkowski

nesota. Rochester has three teams and others with teams that will probably be on the Columbus schedule are Owatonna, Albert Lea and Austin.

"What he'd like to do," said Foens, "is schedule our home games when the Black Hawks are out of town. What we would do is

have a team come here for a Friday night game, stay with our team members, and then play again Saturday morning before they return home.

"That's what we'd do on road games, too," he continued. "It would help cut the travel costs by staying in private homes and it's not hardly worth it to go very far for just one game."

Columbus will be the only high school hockey team in the state next year. But Foens says he can foresee others joining. Dowling of West Des Moines has a club team while Sioux City is the only other town with an indoor ice facility. But Cedar Rapids and Dubuque are

currently talking of such facilities.

One of the other possibilities for high school teams, the Waterloo public school system, doesn't appear ready to follow.

"I HAVE always said that I thought the Recreation Commission and the Waterloo Black Hawks are doing a tremendous job with their hockey program for kids," said Finn Eriksen, director of health, physical education and athletics for the Waterloo public schools. "I don't think it is possible for the schools to do everything. However, I think this will be a great thing for Columbus High."

One of the problems with See COLUMBUS Continued on page 46, col. 5

starting a new sport, especially one like hockey, is the expense of equipment. Foens indicated that most of the money will be raised privately with very little of the estimated \$2,500 to \$3,500 needed for the initial year coming from the present athletic budget. He does feel that the program could become self-supporting after the initial investment.

The tentative plans call for the team to begin practice in mid to late November with the season to start in late December or early January.

"We'd like to have at least six weeks practice before our first game," explained Foens. "We really don't know how many teams we will have. It will depend entirely how many kids we get out for the sport and what kind of schedule we can arrange."

THE SEASON is slated to run concurrent with the present high school basketball and wrestling seasons, but Foens doesn't see those programs being hurt.

"I don't feel it will hurt those programs at all," he said. "We have a lot of hockey players in school now and I can't think of one of them who sit out for another sport now."

"We'll probably get some

more kids coming to Columbus," he admitted, "but I don't think it will be that many. What I think might happen is that a kid who started in a parochial school and for some reason switched to the public might come here now because of our hockey team. But I don't foresee very many. But one thing, if a kid wants to play hockey for us he must attend Columbus. That's a rule of the IHSAA."

One thing Foens stressed in making the announcement is the desire to not interfere with any recreation programs.

"WE DON'T want to get in their way," he said. "We have to work out our practice schedule yet but I can see us practicing maybe before school from 7 to 8:30 a.m. or maybe from 2 to 3:30 p.m. before the recreation program starts."

The Minnesota rules that Columbus will follow are the same as the NCAA rules, but one of the Minnesota rules that is stressed is a rule concerning fighting.

Any fighting is dealt with severely, according to Foens. Anyone fighting is automatically ejected from the game. A second offense during the season is

automatically a suspension of five games.

ANOTHER PART that is a little different is that a lot of back checking is eliminated. That eliminates some of the contact of the sport but also makes it a faster game.

Hockey is one of the major sports in Minnesota, where Columbus will find most of its competition, as shown by the 95,000 people who witnessed the state high school meet this year.

Dutkowski is in his 12th year on the Columbus High staff. Until now only sports assignment has been as head baseball coach.

He came here to play hockey for the Black Hawks, but has not been an active player since they returned to the United States Hockey League after the city's one-year venture in the Central Professional League during the 1969-70 season.

He has a Canadian hockey background and played hockey while attending college in Colorado.

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