

Mason City hockey team opens Friday

Mason City's high school hockey team will open its season at home Friday with nine experienced players on first-year coach John Pete's roster.

Mason City will meet Ankeny at 8 p.m. on the rink at 6th St. and N. Tyler.

"I think we can play hockey with any team in the state," said Pete in assessing this year's club.

The high school team is not affiliated with Mason City High athletics, as hockey is not sanctioned by the Iowa High School Athletic Association. So, the supporting group is the Mason City Youth Hockey Association. This is the second season of competition for the local high school team.

Mason City plays in the B Division of the Iowa High School Hockey League. Other members of that division are Ames, Des Moines Lincoln and Ankeny. After completion of league play, the top two teams in the B division will compete in the state playoffs with all members of the A division. Playoffs begin in early March.

Among the returnees for Mason City is Scot Huff, a junior center who led the club in scoring last year.

Other veterans are: Steve Nielsen, wing; Tom Mackin, wing; Greg Dorenkamp, defenseman; Dave Wilson, wing; Brad Kittleson, goalie; Jack Oedgaard, goalie; Wayne Solomon, wing, and Todd Fitzgerald, defenseman.

Only two players on the team are seniors — Kittleson and Dorenkamp.

Pete also expects help from seven other players, three of them freshman and one a junior *girl* defenseman (defenseperson?).

The freshmen are Steve Krittrenbrink and John Loffing, both defenseman, and wing Mike Duda. Wingmen Perry Hull and Ned Anderson may see a lot of action as will wing Randy Pierce, a transfer from Des Moines, where he moved to from Mason City just one year ago.

The female in this group is Pat Denny of Charles City. Pete said Denny is an "excellent" player and will "absolutely" get quite a bit of skating time.

Pete believes his team is a co-favorite to win the B Division title this year. He noted that his club enjoys a slight advantage in home games because Mason City is the only team in the league that plays outdoors.

The schedule

Jan. 6 — Ankeny, home, 8 p.m.

Jan. 21 — Ankeny, away, 9:30 p.m.

Jan. 22 — Ames, away, 12 noon.

Jan. 27 — Des Moines Lincoln, away, 7:50 p.m.

Jan. 28 — Ames, home, 8 p.m.

Feb. 4 — Des Moines Lincoln, home, 8 p.m.