



Ready for action

These six Mason City high school hockey club players, all seniors, have played either full-time or part-time varsity since their freshman year and hope to help the Mohawks to their best season ever this winter. From left are (front) Bill Johann, Jay Bloomfield and Brad Nielsen, and (back) Dan Duda, John Burnett and John Brandt. (Staff photo by Charles Schlosser).

Local hockey club a seasoned crew

By Jeff Tecklenburg
Sports Editor

Iowa High School Hockey League standings

FINAL 1981

MASON CITY — John Pete is hoping much the same formula that carried Mason City High School's football team to the state playoff finals this fall will produce the best prep hockey team in the decade-old existence of the Mason City Youth Hockey Association.

Nine Mohawk varsity football players are members of the hockey squad and many of them likely will be key performers — seniors John Brandt, Jay Bloomfield, John Burnett, Tom Cameron and Brad Nielsen; and juniors Jeff Kleven, Tim Merrill, Bill Peterson and Eric Thompson. All but Merrill and Peterson lettered in hockey last year.

Pete, heading into his fourth season as the coach, believes the carryover from football success can only help his team.

"Those football players have a real strong self-belief in themselves," he said. "They'll help give us a strong nucleus."

There are a dozen varsity lettermen back from last year's squad, which was 4-12, good for a tie for seventh in the nine-team Iowa High School Hockey League. Other veterans are seniors Dan Duda and Tony Gregor, junior Brian Millard and sophomore David Beard.

Mason City is the lone league member that does not have an indoor ice facility in or near its community, and Pete concedes that always is a problem for Mohawk teams, which often have to practice outdoors or contract for time at Austin's Riverside Arena, also the site of all home games.

"Last year, we played some excellent hockey at times. But we lacked a lot of ice time because of the mild weather," he said. "Hopefully, the weather will be better this year. We've also contracted for more ice time in Austin. We made that commitment because of the kind of players we have."

Pete said team speed will be a big plus. "We've also got three strong lines (three forwards), depth we've never had before," he noted. "Most of the seniors have been all or most of the way through our youth hockey program, and that helps."

Brandt, who rushed for more than 1,200 yards on the football field this fall, was the No. 5 scorer in the league last year. The center forward totaled 23 goals and 22 assists for 45 points. Johann, a wing forward, ranked 15th with 28 points. The Mohawks also have a veteran goalie in Duda, a regular last year and part-time performer two seasons ago.

Those three plus wing forward Burnett and defensemen Bloomfield and Nielsen probably will comprise the starting lineup for Mason City's season and home opener at 1:45 p.m. Saturday.

	W	L	T	Pts.
Columbus.....	14	1	0	28
Waterloo.....	12	4	0	24
Urbandale.....	11	5	0	22
WDM Valley.....	11	5	0	22
Sioux City.....	9	7	0	18
Hoover-R'sevolt	7	8	0	14
Mason City.....	4	12	0	8
WDM. Dowling.	4	12	0	8
Ames.....	0	16	0	0

"After those, we'll still play a lot of people," said Pete.

There are 31 players on the high school roster. Among the younger prospects at this point, Pete mentioned juniors Thompson and Kleven, sophomore Rick Slotness and freshman twins Dana and David Despenas as promising candidates.

The Mohawk coach has set high goals for his club and insisted "we have a realistic shot at fourth place in the league and then the top four in the playoffs. We'd be very happy with that."

Defending league champ Waterloo Columbus and Waterloo Public again rank as the favorites, said Pete. "Those two have been established so long and their high schools support them."

Pete said West Des Moines Valley also should produce a strong club.

Ron Hanna will be Mason City's team representative for league purposes. Pete will have two assistant coaches in Billy Kaymayer, a former Waterloo prep and later a Waterloo Black Hawks player, and Larry Lisitz, who has played in a Chicago senior (18 and over) league.

In addition to the varsity schedule, a full junior varsity slate is planned for the first time.

Local youth hockey notes:

—The younger age-group leagues so far have signed up 176 youngsters, plus about 20 others for the learn-to-skate program. Local leagues will begin play at the end of December, weather permitting.

—Youth hockey officials are trying to form a seniors league.

Varsity schedule

(Home games at Austin unless otherwise noted)

Dec. 5 — Ames, home, 1:45 p.m.
Dec. 11 — Waterloo Columbus, away, 7:30 p.m.
Dec. 12 — West Des Moines Dowling, home, 2:30 p.m.
Dec. 13 — Des Moines Hoover-Roosevelt, away, 6:30 p.m.
Dec. 19 — Sioux City, home, 3 p.m.
Jan. 2 — La Crosse, home at Albert Lea, no time set.
Jan. 3 — La Crosse, home at Albert Lea, no time set.
Jan. 8 — Waterloo Public, away, 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 10 — Ames, away, 3 p.m.
Jan. 17 — W.D.M. Valley, home, 12:45 p.m.
Jan. 24 — Urbandale, away, 6:30 p.m.
Jan. 29 — Valley, away, 8:30 p.m.
Jan. 30 — Urbandale, home, 2:45 p.m.
Feb. 6 — Columbus, home, 2:45 p.m.
Feb. 6-7 — La Crosse tournament
Feb. 13 — Hoover-Roosevelt, home, 8:15 p.m.
Feb. 14 — Dowling, away, 6:30 p.m.
Feb. 26 — Waterloo Public, home, 7:15 p.m.
Jan. 27 — Sioux City, away, 3:30 p.m.
March 4-7 — State playoffs, Des Moines.