

Optimistic Metro icers begin tonight

By Terry Hersom
Journal sports editor

It looked like maybe a .500 season for the Sioux City Metro high school hockey team when Coach Barry Head and assistant Dave LeGree took their team to Mason City for a sneak preview on Nov. 17.

But after an impressive showing in the Iowa High School Hockey League Jamboree, Head and LeGree are looking for bigger things.

"When we got there, Ames had already played twice and one of the other coaches said they looked like they'd be the team to beat this year," reflected Head.

"Then, we went out and beat them 4-3," he continued.

The Metros also stopped Valley-Dowling of West Des Moines, 2-1, before dropping a 3-1 verdict to Waterloo Public. All "games" in the jamboree were limited to one-hour time slots.

The Sioux City preps open their season officially with a two-game road trip this weekend, facing Waterloo Columbus tonight and Ames on Saturday. Their first home game will be Dec. 14 with Waterloo Public.

"We're always optimistic," admitted Head, "but we've got nine guys returning from last year plus



Head



LeGree

some pretty good kids up from the bantam (14-15) group that finished second in the Midwest Amateur Hockey League last year."

The 15-member varsity roster also includes Honnes Koivu, an exchange student at East High from Finland.

The high school program includes 28 students from the metro area.

"It was pretty difficult deciding the last four or five for the varsity," observed Head, who played 3½ seasons for the Sioux City Musketeers during the United States Hockey League's semi-pro era. "That's a good situation."

LeGree is also an ex-Musketeer, serving two seasons as a goaltender.

"Both goalies have looked impressive," noted LeGree.

Goalie Mark Laurent, a senior from North, is a returning veteran. The other varsity netminder is Scott Patrick of East, the only freshman with the varsity.

"We look to be strong on defense this year," said Head.

In fact, Head is impressed enough with his defensemen that three former backliners — Rob Casper, Brad Kieler and Brian Reynolds have all moved to forward this season.

The defensemen include Koivu plus Mark Schmith, a junior from East, and brothers Bryan and Mike Swartzel, both from Sergeant Bluff. Bryan is a senior and Mike, one of the bantam graduates, a sophomore.

Casper, a junior from North, centers perhaps the strongest scoring line, joining Heelan senior Mike Emerick and West sophomore Brian Burke. Kirk Swanson, a senior from West, centers another line which includes sophomore Brian Reynolds of West and senior Shane Rol of East.

Casper and Emerick were both noteworthy performers in football this fall. Casper, also a tight end, was the leading punter in the Sioux Interstate Conference. Emerick was a reliable running back for Heelan.

rushing for over 100 yards in the Crusaders' first meeting with arch-rival East.

The third line is an all-sophomore trio from North — Chad McCormick, Tom O'Brien and Brad Kieler.

The varsity squad includes five students from North, four from East, three from West, two from Sergeant Bluff-Luton and one from Heelan.

"We'd like to see some more fan support this year," said Head. "It would be nice if we could get the high schools to boost it a little more. We've got all the schools involved."

The Iowa prep league consists of seven teams this year, a decrease of three with Dubuque dropping its program and a pair of consolidations taking place. Valley and Dowling have merged, as have Des Moines Public and Urbandale.

Curiously, Des Moines Public defeated Urbandale in the state championship game last winter.

Metro Schedule

November: 30 — at Waterloo Columbus.
December: 1 — at Ames. 8 — at Omaha. 9 — at Omaha. 14 — Waterloo Public. 15 — Waterloo Public. 20-30 — Mason City Holiday Tournament.
January: 5 — Valley-Dowling. 12 — Waterloo Columbus. 19 — at Des Moines-Urbandale. 20 — at Valley-Dowling. 26 — Mason City.
February: 1-2-3 — Omaha Tournament. 9 — Des Moines-Urbandale. 16 — Ames. 23 — at Mason City.
March: 1-2-3 — State tournament at Des Moines.
Note: All home games played at the Siouxland Ice Bubble at 3:30 p.m., except Dec. 14 and Feb. 19, which are 7:30 p.m. games.