

Mohawk hockey team at state

By Tom Thoma

Sports Editor

MASON CITY — Niklas Hudin is a hunted man.

No matter where he goes, a couple of guys are on him, bumping him around, trying to make his life miserable.

It hasn't worked.

Hudin, a foreign exchange student from Sweden, has adjusted to hockey — U.S. style — to lead the Iowa High School Hockey League in scoring.

Today he leads the Mason City Mohawk team into state tournament play against Sioux City at 3:45 p.m. in Des Moines.

Mason City is 11-8-1 in league play and 17-13-2 overall. Sioux City is 11-9-0.

Hudin has been a key to keeping the Mohawks going during a season filled with injuries. From Dec. 9 until a couple weeks ago, the Mohawks have not been without serious injury.

One of the leading players, fleet Jeremy Scheetz, went out in December. He has been back for a few weeks, and coach John Lloyd hopes he will take some of the heat off Hudin.

"He's taken a beating," Lloyd said of Hudin. "They're all playing him away from the play with two guys on him. Teams really go at him, but he still gets three or four points a game."

After he finishes the year here, Hudin will return to Sweden to play hockey two more years. He will enjoy the less-physical style of hockey.

"You never see a fight in Sweden," said Hudin. "They push each other around the goalie, but not fighting. There's too much."

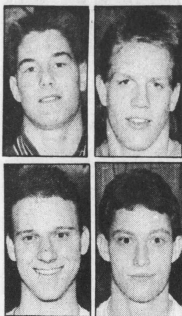
"When they try to hit, they try to kill each other."

Still, hockey is hockey.

"Hockey is fun wherever you play it," he said. "It doesn't make much difference."

Hudin and Scheetz are stand-outs at wing and center. Also among the scoring leaders are Mark Peterson at wing and defenseman Brian Bahnsen. "You usually don't have a high-scoring defenseman," said Lloyd.

At goalie, Mason City will have



Mohawk leaders: Scoring leaders for the Mason City High team are (top from left) Niklas Hudin, Mark Peterson, Brian Bahnsen and Jeremy Scheetz

Peter Ackerman, a senior, and Matt Swanson, a freshman. Both have hamstring injuries, although Swanson's may be least serious.

Swanson may get the start today because he has beaten Sioux City twice, allowing just two goals.

If Mason City wins, it will likely play undefeated Valley-Dowling (20-0-0 in league play) on Saturday. Valley-Dowling plays winless Ames today.

"Valley-Dowling is by far the favorite," said Lloyd. "But we think second through fourth will be pretty even."

Mason City is the only team to beat Valley-Dowling all through the season, winning a holiday tournament game in Mason City.

Lloyd said the Mohawks have done well this year because "we're fairly well balanced and more together."

"And adding somebody like Nick Hudin..."