



Globe-Gazette photo by BILL SPELTZ

Leading the way for the Mason City Mohawk hockey team this year are (from left) Dan Klocke, Isaac Sorensen, Shawn Graven and Jim Shovein.

Repeat title is 'must' for Mohawk skaters

By BILL SPELTZ
Of The Globe-Gazette

MASON CITY — They won't be sneaking up on anybody this season.

Then again, they may not have to.

The Mason City Mohawk hockey team, which surprised everyone last year by winning a state title despite its No. 6 seeding in the state tournament, will try to defend its title this year with a team that is even stronger and more experienced.

The big question is, will the team have the same burning desire as its overachieving predecessors?

"They've got something to prove," said coach John Lloyd of this year's team. "It wasn't a fluke that they won (last year), they went out there and just plain took it to them and deserved it..."

"Winning state really meant a lot to these kids," he added. "It

was probably one of the most emotional teams I've seen, and the drive to try and do that again is really strong with their lifting weights and everything this year."

According to center Jim Shovein, a leader on this year's team, the Mohawks are not willing to settle for anything

less than a repeat.

"We definitely have a better team than we had last year," said Shovein, whose team opens at Waterloo tonight. "It's a must that we win the championship this year."

"We have a lot more experience than we did last year," he added. "We didn't have that

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Lloyd

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many seniors (in 1996-97), and this year we have a lot more upperclassmen."

Actually the Mohawks have 10 key role players back from last year, including the most valuable player of the state tournament in goalie Isaac Sorensen. The team did, however, lose five seniors from last year, including goal-scoring phenom Jason Anderegg.

The loss of team leadership is a concern for Lloyd. But if this year's pre-season workouts are any indication, the coach has nothing to worry about.

"The level of intensity is way up from last year," said Lloyd. "Our practices have been very good."

According to senior wing Dan Klocke, the Mohawks are intent on turning their hard work in practices into victories in close games.

"We've worked hard on our conditioning so we can stay (strong) through the third period and work the other teams," said Klocke. "Hopefully we'll pull out some wins with that."

The Mohawks will need plenty of endurance and intensity to make up for their shortcomings

in size.

"We have some big kids, but they're not overly big," Lloyd said. "We will get against a couple teams that are really big in size and they'll want to push us around. How they handle that and not retaliate is what we're looking for."

Shovein is one player who isn't buying into the size excuse at all.

"We got a lotta speed and a lotta guys that can hold their own out there body-wise too," said Shovein. "We've got kids that like to hit, and that's the way we play."

Joining Shovein, Klocke and Sorensen on the list of experienced returnees for the Mohawks are wings John Anderson, Zane Kantaris, Eric Harlan, Jerry Springer and Nate Stanton along with defensemen Brad Price, Mike Blaisdell, David Russell, Shawn Graven and Tom Zanios, and goalie Ramy Abujaborah.

"We have high hopes, and we always hope they can win state tournament," said Lloyd of his team. "But it always begins in what their attitude is once we get into the season."

"... A lot of it is what they are willing to do," he added, "and how well we can motivate them."