

HIGH SCHOOL HOCKEY TOURNEY

Mohawks open today against 'best team'

By **DICK JOHNSON**
Of The Globe-Gazette

ST. JOSEPH, Mo. — Besides having to drive long distance to reach the state hockey tournament, Mason City High will open against one of the best teams in the field.

The Mohawks (17-6) will play Kansas City, Mo., at 1 this afternoon in St. Joseph.

Kansas City has beaten the Mohawks twice this season, 3-1 on Jan. 30, and 7-1 on Jan. 31.

"I consider them the best team in the league, with the talent they have," Mason City

coach John Lloyd said. "We're capable of winning it all, and we're capable of getting blown away by Kansas City, depending on how sharp they (Mohawk players) want to be, I guess."

Seven different players scored for Kansas City in that 7-1 victory.

"They kind of gave us a lesson in hockey. I thought they were that good," Lloyd said. "They shoot the puck very well, and they play good position. We've got to play stronger against them, we've got to play the body with them and not let them skate with the puck."



Mason City coach John Lloyd said the Mohawks' success will depend on the play of the seniors.

"They shoot, and they shoot to score," he added. "They're an outstanding hockey team, there's no doubt about it."

Mason City is seeking its first championship since 1997 and its third overall.

The Mohawks are led by junior forward Ben Klocke — the team's top scorer — and

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junior goalie Ramy Abu Jobarah.

Lloyd thinks he also has some of the league's best defensemen in seniors Brad Price, David Russell, T.J. Shovein and Luke Ward, junior Chris Mobley, and sophomore Jake Sorensen.

Six Mason City players competed in the high school All-Star game last week, and senior forward Jon Anderson scored in the East team's 7-5 loss to the West.

"They've been working hard these last two weeks," Lloyd said. "If we grade them by the way we played the first half of the season, we're a very good hockey team."

The second half featured a 31-

day layoff. And Lloyd said his players haven't been sharp since.

But they finished the regular season on a strong note, rallying from a two-goal deficit to defeat Ames 5-4 in overtime on Feb. 27. Also, center Ben Swyter is back after missing nearly a month with a badly sprained ankle, and Adam Clopton is back at forward.

Lloyd said Kansas City caught the Mohawks when they weren't playing well. And the Blades did lose a few games in their division.

"I hope we can turn things around again," he said. "We're capable, but we've got to play good hockey. As long as we play good hockey, we'll be all right. We just need our seniors to lead the way."