

Mohawks open against league power

■ Mason City opens Saturday vs. Lancers at Omaha.

By TOM THOMA
Of The Globe-Gazette

OMAHA, Neb. – John Lloyd's not sure whether his young Mason City High hockey players are ready for the task at hand this weekend.

Because of football, Lloyd has had several key players for just a few days of practice. And several, including starting defenseman Jake Sorensen, are still with Clear Lake's playoff football team.

What's more, the Mohawks' first games are on the road against the Omaha Lancers, one of the Iowa High School Hockey League favorites. The JV plays at 5:30 p.m. Saturday with the varsity game at 7; on Sunday, the JV game is 8:45 a.m. with the varsity at 10:15.

"So they're going to get some experience right off the bat," Lloyd said of the young Mohawks. "I'm sure they're not going to be ready for it, but they're going to have to be."

How young are they? One line – Andre Lar-

ivee, Robby Springer and Matt Paulson – played bantams last year.

"Paulson is a big kid," Lloyd said, "but the other two are little guys, and we're not very big all the way around this year."

But the first two lines have plenty of experience, and Lloyd will count a lot on the likes of Eric Harlan, Jon Anderson, Jerry Springer, Tom Harlan, Ben Klocke and Adam Clopton to help carry the team, especially in the early going.

"The first two lines are going to be pretty equal," he said.

On defense, Lloyd has captain Brad Price along with David Russell and T.J. Shovein back.

"Those three will give us good experience," the coach said.

In goal, the Mohawks are solid with Romy Abu Jobarah, who split time with the varsity last year, and played JV when he didn't start

with the first unit.

"He's looking good, and we're counting a lot on him," Lloyd said. "I told him I want him to work on moving the puck the ice on a breakout himself. If he can learn to play it well, he can hit a wing up the ice. But otherwise, his experience and just being a good goalie is going to help us."

The high school league has expanded to include another Des Moines team (there now are the Capitals and new Oak Leafs) along with Lincoln, Neb. Mason City doesn't play Lincoln, the Omaha Gladiators or St. Joe.

The top four teams in each six-team division advance to the state tournament.

"It could be a struggle unless you're a dominating team," Lloyd said.

He doesn't know whether the Mohawks will be dominating, but he does like their hard work so far.

"We had to spend some time with conditioning," he said. "We haven't had a whole of (practice) because of the small amount of time we've been together and no preseason games. So far I like their work ethic. Even the young kids that are coming up are really working hard."



Lloyd