

High school hockey rivals face off

By ROB GRAY

REGISTER STAFF WRITER

The Des Moines Capitals remember the image: Jubilant Oak Leafs jumping and circling the ice in triumph after their first win in six meetings between the teams.

"For them, it was winning the Stanley Cup," said Capitals assistant coach Jeff Baker. "It made their year."

The Capitals want to avoid a repeat of that scene when the two Des Moines-area high school hockey teams meet for the first of three matches this season at 8:30 p.m. Thursday at the Metro Ice Sports Arena, 72nd Street and Hickman Road.

The Capitals (5-3) and Oak Leafs (3-3) play again Dec. 8 and Feb. 23. All of the games will be played at the ice arena to accommodate approximately 1,000 fans.

For the Oak Leafs, Thursday's match offers a chance to provide further proof of their emergence as a power in the 12-team Iowa High School Hockey League. The Oak Leafs finished above .500 for the first time in its four-year history last season, 17-10-1.

"The first two years we were building a team," said Oak Leafs coach Doug Borud, who has been

Des Moines Capitals (5-3) vs. Des Moines Oak Leafs (3-3)

WHEN: 8:30 p.m. Thursday; junior-varsity game at 6:45.

WHERE: The Metro Sports Ice Arena, 7201 Hickman Road, Urbandale

TICKETS: \$5 general admission; \$2 for seniors; \$1 for students

SERIES HISTORY: The Capitals have won five of six games played between the teams.

LAST SEASON: The Oak Leafs recorded their first win in the series, 2-1. The loss dealt a blow to the Capitals' hopes of a fourth consecutive Iowa High School Hockey League season title. The Capitals won the other game, 7-3.

AT A GLANCE: The teams play each other three times this season for the first time ever. Chad Costello is the Capitals' leading scorer with five goals and 13 points. Nick Spring leads the Oak Leafs with five goals and eight points.

with the team since its inception. "Last year, the battles really heated up."

Most players consider the



On guard: Drew Berk, goalie for the Des Moines Capitals, blocks a shot during practice.

intra-city matches the most exciting and important in the recently expanded 33-game season.

But the rivalry is rooted in respect and common ground, not animosity.

"It's not ugly; it's not mean," Baker said. "It's just a game you want to win. It's like beating up on your brother. You can beat him, but you don't want anyone else to."

Both teams feature several Dowling and Valley students, with students from Urbandale, Roosevelt, Ankeny, Lincoln, Waukee, Norwalk and Iowa Christian Academy also represented. On school days, many players share classrooms as friends. That changes once the puck hits the ice.

"We leave that friendship outside the rink," said Oak Leaf senior Dan Israel, who leads Valley.

Area bragging rights are a big

deal, players and coaches agreed.

"I expect a real hard-hitting, real fast-paced, real up, exciting game," said the Capitals' Max Holmes, a Dowling freshman. "Probably a lot of shots on goal, a lot of quick goals, a lot of nice moves. A lot of guys just at the top for this game."

Both teams identify aggressiveness and intensity as strengths. Conversely, that intensity can lead to inconsistent, hot and cold, play.

"We're up and down, and we don't always play as a team," Borud said.

For the first time, the goals of the two teams coincide: Winning the league, and reaching the state club high school tournament in March.

The Capitals have won season titles three of the last four years. Oak Leafs' seniors hope to make their marks as their high school eligibility winds down.

SONGBIRD DIGITAL™ the hearing aid it's disposable.



No batteries to
replace, no repairs,
and no major
commitment.

You could be wearing
SONGBIRD today. Each aid
(Professional fees additional) lasts 70 Days

DR. SANDRA HOBSON A.U.D.
278-2413 1-800-526-4337
SUITE 265 • 3839 MERLE HAY RD
DES MOINES, IA 50310

1999
SENS
ating • Cooling

• INSTALLATION

**placement
Parts & Labor**

Not valid
w/any other
special offer.

3-0680