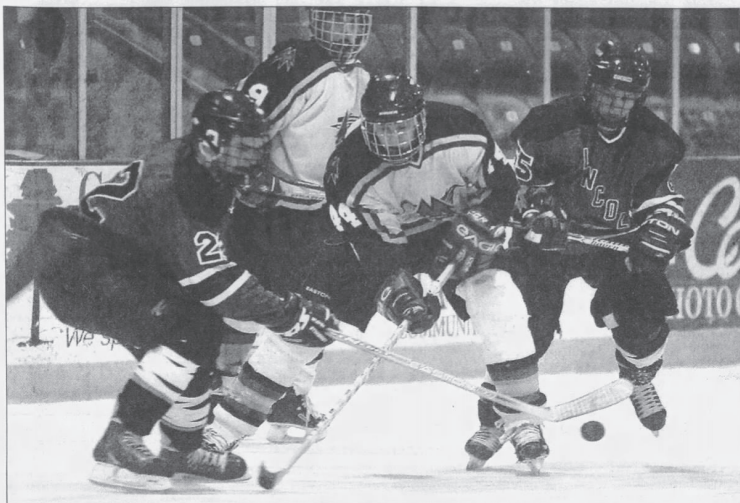


Mohawks squeak into semis



BRANDON POLLOCK/Waterloo Courier

Mason City's Zach Buss (center) fights for control of the puck with Lincoln's Jordan Ross (left) and Ryan West during their first-round game at the state hockey tournament last night in Waterloo.

Murtaugh's overtime heroics oust Des Moines Lincoln, 3-2

By DOUG BARRETT
Of The Globe Gazette

WATERLOO — The Lincoln Stars were about the only team to figure out the Mason City Mohawks this season.

On Friday the Stars almost figured out the Mohawks for good.

Thanks in part to a late surge, the Mohawks beat Lincoln 3-2 in overtime in the opening round of the Iowa High School Hockey League state tournament. Junior forward Mike Murtaugh came through at the end, scoring on a feed from Cole Despenas 39 sec-

onds into the extra period.

"I didn't even know who gave it to me, I just shot it in the net," Murtaugh said. "I didn't know. We scored and that's all that matters. We won the game."

Mason City will play Sioux City today at 1:30 p.m. Sioux City beat Waterloo 10-7 on Friday.

During the regular season Lincoln tied Mason City and lost once in overtime and again in regulation. On Friday the Stars looked like they had finally found the formula to beat the Mohawks.

The Mohawks were playing on a bigger, Olympic-sized rink that

suitied their up-tempo style of play. Still, the Mohawks were outshot 21-17 through the first two periods. For a change, Mason City wasn't the most offensive team on the ice.

The Stars drew first blood as Charlie Davis scored on an assist from Michael Lucchino at 5:37 into the first period. Lincoln held that lead for nearly two full periods.

"This team (Lincoln) is a good team," said Mason City coach Mark Hicks. "They know how to play against us and they did a good job."

Mason City got more persis-

tent on offense and began to wear the Stars down late in the second period.

Cole Despenas brought the Mohawks even with the Stars with a goal at 13:14 in the third. Kyle Abben put Mason City up, 2-1, with 3:21 to play.

Lincoln had a little left in its tank. Lars Nielsen tied the game with 1:14 to play. Nielsen's goal set up Murtaugh's overtime heroics.

"It took us a while to get going," Hicks said. "I think we had the game won, then we had a small breakdown at the end, but

See **MOHAWKS**, B5

Mason City needs OT

MOHAWKS

From Page B3

I don't have a problem with that. To be a championship team we need to be able to battle, and we battled."

"We tend to come out against some teams and not pay up to our potential," Murtaugh said. "After they score a few on us or whatever, we get behind and realize we have to pick it up. Then we pick it up and put it away.

Once again Mason City was led by its top scoring line. Despenas, Murtaugh and Abben entered the tournament as the top three scorers in the league. The trio finished Friday with three goals and three assists.

"That's their job, and the other guys know that," Hicks

said. "Hopefully we'll get goals the rest of the weekend from some other guys.

"They're pressure players. They want the puck on their stick when it's in overtime and they put it out for us."

Lincoln	1	0	1	0	-	2
Mason City	0	0	2	1	-	3

FIRST PERIOD — 1. Lincoln: Charlie Davis (Michael Lucchino), 5:37. Penalties — 1. Mason City: Mike Murtaugh (interference), 3:29.

SECOND PERIOD — no scoring. Penalties — 2. Mason City: Brad Bohl (cross check), 13:51; 3. Lincoln: Jess Thoman (tripping), 14:52.

THIRD PERIOD — 2. Mason City: Cole Despenas (Kyle Abben), 1:46; 3. Mason City: Abben (Carter Angell, Kyle Burgmeier), 11:29; 4. Lincoln: Lars Nielsen (Lucchino, Davis), 13:46. Penalties — 4. Lincoln: Joe Nietfeldt (roughing), 5:45; 5. Mason City: Brandon Millard (elbow), 7:17.

OVERTIME — 5. Mason City: Murtaugh (Despenas, Abben), :39.

Shots by Period

Lincoln	10-11-5-0	—	26
Mason City	8- 9-5-1	—	23

Goalies
Lincoln: Mitch Pope (23 shots, 20 saves);
Mason City: Brandon Lind (26 shots, 24 saves)

Penalties-minutes - Lincoln 2-4; Mason City 3-6