



SARAH SCHUTT/The Globe Gazette

Mason City's Cole Despenas (5) scores for the Mason City Hockey Club in Saturday's afternoon's state tournament semifinal against Kansas City.

Mohawks face Capitals for state championship

By KIRK HARDCASTLE
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DES MOINES — Mason City Hockey Club coach Mark Hicks didn't need to take any notes.

Hicks watched the Des Moines Capitals stop the Des Moines Oak Leafs, 2-1, in the first semifinal contest on Saturday at the Iowa High School Hockey League tournament at the Metro Ice Sports Arena.

The third-seeded Mohawks, who last won a state title in 1997, face the top-seeded Capitals in the championship at 2:45 this afternoon.

Hicks' Mohawks are 0-3 against the Capitals this season — dropping two one-goal games and a 3-0 decision.

"We've played them so many times here this year," the coach said. "I kind of know what they do in certain situations. From a coaching standpoint, I think we're pretty prepared.

"I think the players will be prepared. Hopefully, we play three good periods (today)."

SATURDAY'S RESULTS Championship round

Des Moines Capitals 2, DM Oak Leafs 1
Mason City 8, Kansas City 2

Consolation round

Omaha 7, Waterloo 3
Sioux City 7, Ames 4

Today's Games

8 a.m. (seventh place game) — Waterloo vs. Ames
10:15 a.m. (fifth-place game) — Omaha vs. Sioux City
12:30 p.m. (consolation game) — Oak Leafs vs. Kansas City
2:45 p.m. (championship) — Mason City vs. Capitals

Mason City's Cole Despenas said the Capitals are the ideal team to face in the finals.

"I don't know about everybody else, but I've wanted to play them," he said. "I'm excited to play them. I've wanted to play these guys since the start.

"We're 0-3 against them, and I'm excited to get them back in their home barn."

In the Capitals win over the Oak Leafs, they received second-period

goals from Brad Krueger and Eric Keese to advance to the championship for the fourth time in the last five years.

Hicks said the Capitals, who topped Ames (2-1) in their opener on Friday, play a physical style of hockey.

"We have to match their physicalness," the coach said. "We don't want to come out and kill people, but we need to absorb the checks and give some of our own checks back."

While Hicks is concerned about the physical style of the Capitals, coach Scott Krueger of the Capitals is worried about the Mohawks' offense, which has scored 14 goals in the first two rounds.

"They have the most goals in the league and have good goaltending," coach Krueger said. "They're a well-rounded team. When you play the Oak Leafs, Mason City, Sioux City and Omaha, you have to play your game and you have to have some breaks.

"If you don't, you're going to come out on the wrong side of it."