

# Coach has special guests at tournament

By KIRK HARDCASTLE  
*Of The Globe Gazette*

**DES MOINES** — Mason City Hockey Club coach Mark Hicks has two special guests in attendance at this weekend's Iowa High School League tournament.

His parents, Wayne and Marie, flew in from Arizona on Friday and watched Hicks' Mohawks stop Waterloo, 6-2, in the tournament's opening round.

"It's wonderful having both my mom and dad here," Hicks said. "The last time they saw me either on the bench or on the ice was my senior year in college.

"So to have them here is just awesome. I can't really



Hicks

explain it. It's a great feeling."

Wayne Hicks has a little hockey background himself. He played professional hockey for 21 years.

"We won the Stanley Cup in Chicago when I was there in 1961," Wayne said. "It was the first time they won it 41 years, and they haven't won it since."

Wayne said he could tell early on that his son would get into coaching hockey.

"He started taking (coaching) classes when he was 15," the father said. "He was working as a coach at hockey schools and as an assistant coach in Canada as early as 16."

Wayne said he coached at the junior level after his professional career.

"I owned a team at one time," he said, "and unfortunately I had to make myself coach for awhile."

Wayne said he follows the Mohawks as much as he can

through the Internet but never offers any coaching advice for his son.

"I can't give him any advice, I've never seen his team," he said. "He could probably give me advice. He used to when he was a player."

Wayne called the trip to Iowa for the tournament a special occasion even though it meant leaving the nice weather of Arizona.

"We have the odd bad day there," he said, "but most of the time it's pretty nice."

Friday was also nice for the whole family as the parents saw their son and Mark's step son, Cole Despenas, lead the Mohawks into the state semifinals.

"It just worked out for my dad," Mark said. "He's busy in Phoenix, but they wanted to see Cole play. I think the boys see how much it means to me, and I hope it carries over the rest of the weekend."