Veteran Metros squad has sights set on state meet

By Steven Allspach

Iournal sports write

If the grand experiment works, the Sioux City Metros could find themselves in the thick of the fight for the Iowa High School Hockey League state championship in 2004-05.

With a roster laden with 14 seniors, the Metros will open the season Sunday at the IBP Ice Center, sporting a new look.

High-scoring Kevin Lohry, who collected 24 goals and had

ward to defense and rugged 6-foot-4, 220pound Kyle Bennett will make the switch from defense to forward.

Lohry will be in action when Waterloo visits, but Bennett won't be available for duty until the Heelan football team concludes the season. Bennett, a junior and starting defensive end for the find out if my knee will hold up.



56 points last season to lead the Crusaders, had five goals and 13 team, has been shifted from for- points for the Metros last year.

Bennett and his Heelan teammates opened Class 4A playoff action Wednesday night against Council Bluffs Abraham Lincoln.

"The coaches like the switch to defense because it was their idea," said Lohry, "Actually, it is fine with me, too, because I really need to

"I'm still a little tentative thinking about the knee, but I should get the confidence hack "

Lohry, a West High senior with sterling hockey credentials and great potential, suffered a severe knee injury during a soccer game last June 7. He's un-

dergone surgery on both knees. The timing of Lohry's injury was rotten, coming two weeks before the opening of the Sioux City Musketeers summer camp. He was one of the 80 invitees to the United States Hockey League team's tryout after being selected by the Musketeers in the seventh round of the 2004 USHL draft.

"I was excited about the Musketeers and looking forward to the summer camp and then the knee buckled in while I was just jogging on the field," recalled Lohry, named the most valuable player in the 2003 state tournament. "What a bummer. It was just a freak deal."

SEE METROS continued on page B6



Returning veterans for the Sioux City Metros high school hockey team are, from left, Ben Kambach, Chaz Berglin, Kevin Lohry, Scott Marsh and Chase Peterson. (Staff photo by Jerry Mennenga)

Metros

continued from page B1

Sioux City coaches Jim Peck and Jeff Gray anticipate Lohry blossoming into sort of a Bobby Orr at the prep level. Hall of Famer Orr was one of the highest scoring defensemen in National Hockey League history while playing for the Chicago Blackhawks.

"Kevin's a great skater with outstanding instincts and we feel he'll be able to control the puck and create a lot of scoring opportunities for other players, said Peck. "He definitely knows how to put the puck in the back of the net

"He'll also see action as a forward, but right now we want to give him a chance to show what he can do at the blue line.'

Meanwhile, Peck and Gray anticipate Bennett becoming a real offensive threat as a winger.

You can visualize a big guy like Kyle steaming up the ice, said Gray. "He's just a locomotive up there and is one intimi dating hockey player."

Seniors Chaz Berglin (Dakota Valley) and Ben Kambach (Heelan) are expected to center the top two forward lines.

Kambach had eight goals and

20 points last season and Berglin three goals and 10 points. Scott Marsh, a standout senior pass receiver on the East football team this season, is also back after scoring 16 goals and 32 points last season.

Kyle Eyer (East), Daniel Limoges (West), Ben Held (Hinton), Nick Bauer (West), Chad Corbett (North) and Chase Peterson (Dakota Valley) are among proven goal-scorers who saw considerable varsity duty

last season. At the blue line, sophomore Marshall Tuttle (East) and junior Tyler Hansen (North) are seasoned returnees, as is junior David Hansen (East). Tuttle was one of the 80 players invited to the Musketeers summer camp in

In the goaltending department, Adam Suing and Eric Hoffmeyer are the leading candidates to replace Beau Erick-

Erickson, a three-year varsity performer, was 12-7-1 his senior

Suing, a junior at East, appeared in seven varsity games last season, fashioning a 4-1 record with a .924 save percentage. Hoffmeyer, a senior a North, was also 4-1 with an .887 save percentage in five games.

"We want to take a good look at both of those kids early in the season and we may end up even alternating them if they both play well," said Peck.

The Metros were 21-10-1-1 last year and wound up fifth in the state tournament after winning the state title in 2003 when Lohry was named the tournament most valuable player.

The 2005 IHSHL varsity state tournament will be played in Kansas City March 4-6 and the junior varsity state tourney is in Des Moines March 11-13 in Des