

# Getting defensive

## Warriors build squad around goaltending, defense

By DOUG NEWHOFF  
Sports Editor

**WATERLOO** — The Waterloo Warriors may not put many crooked numbers on the scoreboard this Iowa High School Hockey League season.

They shouldn't have to.

Coach Shawn Weinke is building his third Warriors team from back to front as Waterloo tries to rebound from a disappointing 10-20 campaign marred by injuries and ineptitude.

"Right now, our defense and goaltending are the strongest parts of our team," said Weinke, whose 2004-05 team was young and inexperienced.

This year's squad is still young, but 15 of the Warriors have seen some varsity time.

"Last year, it was kind of getting their feet wet for a lot of these kids," said Weinke. "Now they need to step up to the plate and be our players."

The Warriors have been building toward Saturday's opener at Sioux City all summer. There are 31 players on the varsity and junior varsity rosters.

"They did some summer stuff a couple of days a week, and we've been going every day for the last month," said Weinke. "We've had a couple of scrimmage games, and one nice thing is there aren't really any superstars. Everybody isn't looking around waiting for somebody else to get the job done."

"They are all taking care of their own business. We're on the same page."

The Warriors' defensive corps starts with veteran goaltender Ryan Larrabee, a West High senior. He ranked seventh in the league a year ago with a .896 save percentage.

"He needs to kind of be the man," said Weinke. "He has proven that he can play with the big boys. We're going to lean on him a lot this year to keep us in the games. We're going to have a few breakdowns here and there, and when we do, we need him to step up."

The group that will play immediately in front of Larrabee includes seniors Joe Giachino,



RICK CHASE / Courier Staff Photographer

Waterloo Warriors' coach Shawn Weinke gives instruction to his squad during a recent practice. The Warriors drop the puck for the first time in the regular season Saturday in Sioux City.

Scott Dobes and Tyler Bentley, along with juniors Blake Mische and Andrew Metcalf. It's a solid group with size and strength.

"With Larrabee and the quality defenders we have in front of him, we expect to limit the quality shots on our net," said Weinke.

Offensively, the top returning scorer is Michael Davis, who tallied 10 goals last season. Tyler Mahncke and Bryn Klein will join Davis on the first line. The next group includes Jeremy Richardson, John Thompson, John Christensen and promising freshman Jacob Irey.

Austin Husome, Ben Jenness, Austin Helgeson and Jayson Beal add more varsity experience to the mix.

"We have experience," said Weinke. "But we don't have anybody who has proven on a nightly basis that they can put the puck in the net. It'll be a wait and see thing. Somebody is definitely going to step up. Who that

will be, I don't know."

Elsewhere in the IHSHL, most teams are rebuilding. Seven of the top nine individual scorers have graduated, along with four of the top five goalies.

"A lot of the top kids are gone," said Weinke. "That's good for us. We will have an opportunity, with a stronger defense, to hopefully keep the games to one- or two-goal games and be in it right to the end."

Waterloo has its sights set on a return to the league's postseason tournament. The Warriors failed to qualify last season.

"There's no reason Waterloo shouldn't be in the state tournament every year," said Weinke. "We've got the numbers. We've got the kids. We work hard. That is attainable. Then we will go from there."

"It's up to the kids. It's what they are willing to put into it. If they go work hard and play within the system the coaches have set forward, it will give them an

opportunity to win every night. They just have to go out and execute."

"Then it becomes limitless with what they can accomplish."

### Schedule

(Varsity starting times listed)  
Oct. 29 - at Sioux City, 3 p.m.  
Oct. 30 - at Sioux City, 12:30 p.m.  
Nov. 4 - Ames, 6:30 p.m.  
Nov. 5 - Ames, 6:30 p.m.  
Nov. 11 - at Omaha, 7 p.m.  
Nov. 12 - at Lincoln, 7:15 p.m.  
Nov. 13 - at Omaha, 10:15 a.m.  
Nov. 18 - at Des Moines Capitals, 8 p.m.  
Nov. 25 - Quad-Cities, 6:30 p.m.  
Nov. 26 - Lincoln, 6:30 p.m.  
Nov. 27 - Lincoln, 9 a.m.  
Dec. 2 - Omaha, 6:30 p.m.  
Dec. 3 - at Des Moines Capitals, 8:15 p.m.  
Dec. 9 - at Mason City, 8 p.m.  
Dec. 15 - Dubuque, 6:30 p.m.  
Dec. 16 - Des Moines Capitals, 6:30 p.m.  
Dec. 19 - Kansas City, 9 a.m.  
Dec. 22 - at Mason City, 8 p.m.  
Jan. 7 - Des Moines Capitals, 6:30 p.m.  
Jan. 8 - Sioux City, 9 a.m.  
Jan. 12 - at Cedar Rapids, 7:40 p.m.  
Jan. 13 - Des Moines Capitals, 6:30 p.m.  
Jan. 20 - Quad-Cities, 6:30 p.m.  
Jan. 25 - at Dubuque, 7:45 p.m.  
Feb. 12 - Cedar Rapids, 9 a.m.  
Feb. 15 - Dubuque, 6:30 p.m.  
Feb. 17 - at Ames, 7 p.m.  
Feb. 18 - at Kansas City, 7:15 p.m.  
Feb. 19 - at Kansas City, 9 a.m.  
Feb. 24-26 - at State Tournament, Des Moines