

HIGH SCHOOLS

COACH RETURNS TO HIS ROOTS

Ex-Oak Leafs aide Long, fresh off a state title, takes over as coach of Capitals, for whom he was a player.

By LISA COLONNO
REGISTER STAFF WRITER

Scott Long relegated his Des Moines Oak Leafs gear to the top shelf of his closet and quickly went shopping for some Des Moines Capitals attire in April.

Long swapped teams and positions during the offseason, leaving his job as an assistant coach with the Oak Leafs to become head coach of the Capitals.

He won a Midwest High School Hockey League state championship with the Oak Leafs and now replaces long-time Capitals coach Scott Krueger, who resigned after last season to spend more time with his family.

Des Moines' high school hockey teams have dominated the MHSHL, combining to win the past three state titles. The Capitals and Oak Leafs open the season on the road Saturday.

Long, 24, played for the Capitals in high school. Now he's switching sides again.

"The first time I went to the Oak Leafs I got a bunch of, 'Oh, you're a traitor,'" said Long, who was an Oak Leafs assistant for two years. "Now it's happening again. But it's all in good fun."

The Oak Leafs claimed their first state and regular-season titles last season, posting a 31-2-0 record and leading the 12-team league in goals scored (188) and allowed (37).

They lost leading scorer and record-setting forward Joseph Harcharik to the North Iowa Huskies junior hockey team, but return goaltender Jordan Buenting, who finished second in the league with a .945 save percentage and 26-2-0 record.

"In my opinion, we have the best goalie in the state," Oak Leafs coach Doug Borud said. "He's an athlete. If he gets beat, he'll do something about it. If they get one by him, you know it won't happen again. He gets mad. He takes it seriously."

Ankeny senior Buenting looks to better his stats.

"I'd like to lead the league in goaltending," Buenting said. "Last year I finished second. This year I want to finish



Jordan Buenting is the Des Moines Oak Leafs' top returning goaltender from last season's state championship team. "He takes it seriously," said his coach, Doug Borud.



Scott Long, left wearing hat, is the new head coach for the Des Moines Capitals. He previously had served as assistant coach for the cross-town rival Des Moines Oak Leafs.

first."

Borud expects the Oak Leafs to continue their tradition of having a fast, skilled team, but expects their scoring to be more spread out this season. Harcharik posted 101 points in 33 games last season.

But Borud said the team prides itself on defense.

"We're looking for big things," Borud said.

The first time he'll face his former co-worker Long will come in the annual Turkey Cup game Nov. 21 at SKGGG

Arena in Urbandale.

"It's no different between me and Scott Long or Scott Krueger," Borud said. "We were friends off the ice before we started. It's the way it's always been. I've known the Long family since he played for the Capitals. He'll do a good job. He's taking a hard job replacing one of the best coaches in the league."

The Capitals have participated in five of the past seven title games, winning three, and have won five of the last nine

regular-season titles.

Krueger, 37, coached the team for 12 years and now coaches his two sons' youth teams.

He pushed for Long, his former player, to replace him.

"He loves the game and being at the rink," Krueger said. "It's not a job for him, and I think that's important. I wanted to get someone long-term, who will keep the tradition."

Senior Capitals defenseman Robbie Anderregg expects to have an experienced team with 11 seniors on the roster. Anderregg had Long as a coach when he was 14.

"I think we have a good coach here in Scott Long," said Anderregg, who attends Dowling Catholic. "He definitely expects hard work and perfection. If he doesn't get it, he'll skate us for it."

Long, who works for the Des Moines Youth Hockey Association, said becoming head coach was a goal he had set. He didn't think the chance would come so soon.

"(Krueger) started when he was 24 and I'm 24. Hopefully I'll be able to have the same success," Long said. "It's been exciting so far. I'm thankful for the opportunity."

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MIDWEST HIGH SCHOOL HOCKEY LEAGUE

AMES LITTLE CYCLOONS

2005-06 Record: 7-23-0-3

Key returners: Forward Brendan Babcock finished second on the team with 29 points and was an all-star.

CEDAR RAPIDS MUSTANGS

2005-06 Record: 4-29-0-6

Key returner: Forward John Raney had five points as a sophomore.

DES MOINES CAPITALS

2005-06 Record: 25-5-2-1

2006 state tournament: Won fifth place game.

Key returners: All-star defenseman Robbie Anderregg had 15 points last season; forward Bryan Traeger had 14 points.

DES MOINES OAK LEAFS

2005-06 Record: 31-2-0-0

2006 state tournament: Won first state title.

Key returners: Jordan Buenting finished second in the league with a .945 save percentage; Trey Dillay and Brady France were all-stars.

DUBUQUE DEVILS

2005-06 Record: 9-24-0-0

Key returners: All-star forward Brent Kastelic scored a team-high 15 goals; Josh McLeod had 18 points.

KANSAS CITY JR. OUTLAWS

2005-06 Record: 18-12-2-1

2006 state tournament: Won third-place game.

Key returners: Forward

Price Duncan finished second on the team with 31 points; All-star Jake Isaman is back; goaltender Herbert Kyles posted a .939 save percentage.

LINCOLN JR. STARS

2005-06 Record: 6-24-1-2

Key returners: Bryce Buchmann led with 18 points; Steve Magnuson had nine.

MASSON CITY MOHAWKS

2005-06 Record: 25-5-0-1

2006 state tournament: Lost to Oak Leafs in state championship.

Key returners: Chris Jessen had 25 points; All-star Garrett Heppner posted 14 points.

OMAHA JR. LANCERS

2005-06 Record: 19-13-0-1

2006 state tournament: Lost in semifinals to Oak Leafs.

Finished fourth.

Key returners: All-star Jake Hough had 48 points and a team-high 33 assists; Justin Setlik had 21 points.

QUAD CITY BLUES

2005-06 Record: 20-11-2-0

2006 state tournament: Lost in first round.

Key returners: All-star Kendall Price led the team with 45 points; All-stars Bennett Webster and Alex Lambert also return.

SIOUX CITY METROS

2005-06 Record: 14-19-0-0

2006 state tournament: Lost in the first round to the Oak Leafs.

Key returners: Defenseman Marshall Tuttle was an All-Star last season and led the team with 26 points; Jacob Wille had 19 points.

WATERLOO WARRIORS

2005-06 Record: 15-17-1-0

2006 state tournament: Lost in the first round.

Coach: Shawn Wenke

Key returners: All-star Jake Key led the team in scoring as a freshman with 40 points; Tyler Melnick had 26 points.