

## HIGH SCHOOL HOCKEY

# With Buenting in goal, Oak Leafs have high hopes

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Des Moines Oak Leafs points leader Josh Twinn turned toward the ice during practice this week and nodded toward goaltender Jordan Buenting.

The Oak Leafs claimed their second regular-season title in a row despite losing key members of last season's championship team.

"I guess that kind of happens when you have a goalie like him," said Twinn, a Johnston senior. "He keeps us in the games. Last year we'd win 8-1, now more of our games are 2-1."

Buenting, an Ankeny senior, established himself as the top goaltender in the 12-team league this season, but is set on winning one more title before hanging up his Oak Leafs' gear.

The eight-team Midwest High School Hockey League Championship Tournament opens today with quarterfinal games at two rinks in Urbandale.

Des Moines has two of the most successful programs in the league, with the Oak Leafs or rival Capitals advancing to the league championship game each of the past seven seasons and combining to win the last three titles.

Des Moines' teams could meet in Saturday's semifinal round with wins today. The fourth-seeded Capitals play Waterloo at 12:15 p.m. at 95KGGG Arena and the top-seeded Oak Leafs play Lincoln at 7:15 p.m. at the Metro Ice Sports Facility.

"I go to school with all those guys," Capitals forward Bryan Traeger said of the Oak Leafs. "We're supporting them and they support us because we want to see each other in the final. We can't this year, but we want to win."

The Capitals (19-10-4-0) and Mason City were the only two teams to beat the Oak Leafs (26-4-1-2) in regulation this season. The Oak Leafs' two other regulation losses were forfeits when the team was unable to travel due to inclement weather last weekend.



JOHN CAPS FOR THE REGISTER

Des Moines Oak Leafs goalie Jordan Buenting led the league with a 1.02 goals-against average this season.

### Tourney schedule

#### TODAY

12:15 — (4) Capitals vs. (5) Waterloo at 95KGGG Arena  
2:30 — (3) Quad Cities vs. (6) Kansas City at 95KGGG Arena  
5:00 — (2) Omaha vs. (7) Mason City at Metro Ice Sports Facility  
7:15 — (1) Oak Leafs vs. (8) Lincoln at Metro Ice Sports Facility

#### SATURDAY

8 a.m.; 10:15 a.m. — Consolation round at 95KGGG Arena  
12:30 — Semifinal at 95KGGG Arena  
2:45 — Semifinal at 95KGGG Arena

#### SUNDAY

7 a.m. — Seventh-place game at 95KGGG Arena  
9:15 a.m. — Fifth-place game at 95KGGG Arena  
11:30 a.m. — Third-place game at 95KGGG Arena  
1:45 — Championship at 95KGGG Arena

The Oak Leafs pride themselves on defense, allowing 35 goals in 33 games this season.

Buenting's 26 wins, seven shutouts, 1.02 goals-against average and .957 save percentage lead the league.

"We protect our end of the ice first and then we look for the opportunities to go down and put pucks in the net," said Oak Leafs coach Doug Borud. "That speaks a lot to

our goaltending too. Jordan is a two-year veteran this season and that's what he does — he stops the puck."

Buenting practices a few times a week with the U.S. Hockey League Des Moines Buccaneers, which he said has helped his game.

"(But) I have to credit my defensemen for clearing out the pucks when I leave bad rebounds and my forwards who backcheck and pick up guys coming down the slot," Buenting said. "It's really the whole team."

Capitals first-year coach Scott Long said testing Buenting is key to beating the defending champions.

"If you only shoot 25-30 times on him you are not going to win," Long said.

The Capitals and Oak Leafs tied their season series 1-1-1-1. Long said battling to a scoreless tie with the Oak Leafs in November became a turning point in the Capitals' season.

"We proved to ourselves that we could play with anyone in this league," Long said. "Then we beat them in December and got the momentum building."

The Capitals have last season's first-round tournament loss to Kansas City on their mind.

"That was tough on our home ice. We choked. We're not going to do that again," said Traeger, a Valley senior. "We're going back to state to win it all."

### TEAM CAPSULES

#### D.M. Oak Leafs

Seed: 1  
Record: 26-4-1-2  
Points leader: Josh Twinn, 48 points — 23 goals, 25 assists  
Goaltending leader: Jordan Buenting, 26-4-1 record, 1.02 gaa; .957 save percentage

#### D.M. Capitals

Seed: 4  
Record: 19-10-4-0  
Points leader: Robbie Anderegg, 35 points — 15 goals, 20 assists  
Goaltending leader: Tyler Tunning, 16-9-4; 1.80 gaa; .922 save percentage

#### K.C. Jr. Outlaws

Seed: 6  
Record: 18-10-4-1  
Points leader: Price Duncan, 47 points — 22 goals, 25 assists  
Goaltending leader: Herbert Kyles, 12-3-1 record; 2.03 gaa; .913 save percentage

#### Lincoln Jr. Stars

Seed: 8  
Record: 15-13-2-3  
Points leader: Bruce Buchmann, 46 points — 28 goals, 18 assists  
Goaltending leader: Lynn King, 8-8-1-1 record; 3.18 gaa; .887 save percentage

#### Mason City Mohawks

Seed: 7  
Record: 16-12-3-2  
Points leader: Chris Jessen, 40 points — 19 goals, 21 assists  
Goaltending leader: Letrenee Lowery, 16-12-3-2 record, 2.19 gaa; .902 save percentage

#### Omaha Jr. Lancers

Seed: 2  
Record: 21-9-3-0  
Points leader: Jace Hough, 56 points — 33 goals, 23 assists  
Goaltending leader: Josh Pijewski, 15-4-1 record; 1.46 gaa; .915 save percentage

### Ticket info

Tickets cost \$20 for a weekend pass or \$8 for a daily ticket. Children 12 and younger get in free.

#### Quad Cities Blues

Seed: 3  
Record: 20-9-3-1  
Points leader: Kendall Price, 55 points — 27 goals, 28 assists  
Goaltending leader: Reed Festing-Smith, 11-7-2 record; 1.81 gaa; .921 save percentage

#### Waterloo Warriors

Seed: 5  
Record: 19-10-2-2  
Points leader: Jake Irey, 52 points — 29 goals, 23 assists  
Goaltending leader: Brian Dobes, 19-10-2 record; 2.09 gaa; .926 save percentage