



Stephen Mally/Freelance

Mustangs Coach Jerry Moon, a professor at the University of Iowa from Iowa City, explains a drill to his team during a recent practice at the Cedar Rapids Ice Arena. The high school hockey team begins its fourth season Oct. 31 in the Quad Cities.

The Puck Professor

By Jeff Johnson
The Gazette

CEDAR RAPIDS — Just call Cedar Rapids Mustangs head coach Jerry Moon "The Professor."

That's not because Moon knows everything there is to know about hockey, although he's done a good job trying to grow the local high school program.

Moon is actually Dr. Jerry Moon, an associate professor in the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders at the University of Iowa. He just moonlights with this hockey thing, no pun intended.

"The more kids we can get introduced to the sport, the better," said

Moon, an Ontario native who has taught at Iowa since 1985. "Hockey really is addictive. Once you begin playing, you just want to keep playing."

As you'd expect from a Canadian, he grew up at the rink, playing through the Midget ranks. His skating days all but ended when he went to college, but not his passion for the sport.

Moon's sons eventually began playing competitively for a program in the Quad Cities. That got him involved again, this time as a coach.

"I started coaching them and just kept doing it," said Moon, 52. "After they graduated, I didn't want to quit.

"I enjoy coaching. I've coached Squirt, which are kids 9 years old, up to high school. Obviously, coaching 9-year-olds is a lot different from coaching high school kids. It's a different challenge, but it's all very rewarding."

This is Moon's second year as head coach of the Mustangs, who begin their 32-game season Oct. 31 in the Midwest High School Hockey League.

The league consists of 14 teams in 12 cities: Cedar Rapids, Ames, Des Moines, Dubuque, Mason City, Waterloo, Davenport, Sioux City, Omaha, Kansas City, Lincoln (Neb.) and Kearney (Neb.).

This is the fourth year Cedar Rapids has had a program, although it shared with Dubuque the first two years. Players come from all Metro high schools, as well as Montezuma, Tipton and West Branch.

There are 32 players on the roster.

"The program is coming along," Moon said.

"We've had three weeks of practice, and I'm seeing some encouraging things. We really improved toward the end of last season, and I think the kids have picked up where they left off."

■ Contact the writer: (319) 398-6259 or jeff.johnson@gazcomm.com