

# Sliding into the big show

Seventh-seeded Mohawks ready for year-end tourney

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MASON CITY — A 5-4 win over Omaha on Jan. 14 still resonates with the Mohawk Hockey Club these days, and there's a couple reasons for it.

The first being it's the Mohawks' opponent today as they open the Midwest High School Hockey League tournament in Ames as the No. 7 seed vs. the second-seeded Jr. Lancers. The second is that's the game they feel perfectly showcases what this season's team is all about — hard work.

The Mohawks outworked the Jr. Lancers, who were still second in the league standings at that time, on that night and it's something they just can't stop thinking about.

"I think we just need to do the same thing we did before," junior Nate Lassise said. "We're not as talented as them, really, but hard work will pretty much get the win for us if we all come together."

That's the mantra the Mohawks have lived by all season.

Sure, there have been bumps in the road on the way to today's 4 p.m. game, but each one of those bumps might have knocked a little character into this team. They have no problem with their talent level, they just want to outwork teams and it's worked for them as they're back in the MHSIL tournament with at least a shot at competing for a title with the



Mohawk Hockey Club's Jacob Lang celebrates during a game this season vs. Waterloo.

league's top 8 teams.

"Like Nate said, hard work beats talent," junior Zach Jimenez said. "We're going out there and we're just going to try to outwork them."

The Mohawks and Jr. Lancers split their season series 1-1 with Omaha taking the other game 4-1 a day after the Mohawks won 5-4.

Jimenez comes into the game with a team-best 34 points (19 goals and 15 assists), Lassise has 23 points (10 goals, 13 assists) and Cole Baskerville has 17 (eight goals, nine assists).

Slowing down the Jr. Lancers' offense is where the Mohawks' priorities lie.

Omaha has seven players with 20 or more points, led by Cody Walters' 36 (15 goals, 21 assists). The Jr. Lancers come into the tournament with the third-most goals (116).

In addition to trying to stay out of the penalty box, the Mohawks will lean heavily on senior goalkeeper Derek Walker, who has played well in his

## ON TAP TODAY

### Midwest High School Hockey League tournament

#### At Ames

Noon—Des Moines Oak Leafs (17-8-0-3) vs. Sioux City (19-7-2-0)

2 p.m.—Kansas City (15-11-1-1) vs. Waterloo (21-7-0-0)

4 p.m.—Mason City (15-14-0-2) vs. Omaha (23-4-1-0)

6 p.m.—Ames (10-14-3-1) vs. Des Moines Capitals (25-1-1-1)

first season starting between the pipes. Walker has a goals-against average of 3.04 and has won 10 games.

"I told him yesterday 'I personally think you've done an outstanding job all year. When you were a bantam player I had

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## Mohawks

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my doubts, but your work ethic

made you into our No. 1 goaltender," Mason City co-coach John Lloyd said. "As soon as our season started I knew he was our No. 1 goaltender and he still stays that

way?"

The previous win over Omaha gives the Mohawk Hockey Club hope and a little bit of confidence, and that's all they say they need in

order to have a chance at springing the upset.

"At state, everybody gives it their all," senior Adrian Debrah said. "You can just feel the inten-

sity. For us seniors, it's out last year here so we're going to play with all the passion we've got, and I know the young kids will be there with us."