

# Metros open hockey season Saturday

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SIoux CITY — Considering the Sioux City Metros, it's all about moving up the ladder.

Two years ago when Dave LeGree became head coach, the squad won its final three regular-season games to claim the eighth and final seed in the Midwest High School Hockey League Tournament. A year

later, it won three more regular-season games, then finished third at the MHSHL Tournament, three spots higher than seeded.

"When these kids were freshmen and sophomores, they took their lumps," said LeGree, whose squad opens the season with a weekend series at Sioux City's IBP Ice Center against the Waterloo Warriors, with games at 3 p.m. Saturday and 10 a.m. Sunday.

"They made state their first year, then they moved up the next year, so now it's time to move up the ladder and look for a decent season. I told them, it's in your hands. This is your team. Do what it takes to move up to the next level. They understand that. They all get along and that's a key

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Sioux City will build around the foundation of seven returning skaters, led by center Tanner Frerichs, who enters his fourth varsity year with career totals of 43 goals and 64 assists, which included last season's totals of 19 goals and 29 assists. Frerichs will play on the top line along with left wing Drake Beller (2 goals, 11 assists) and right wing James Page (12, 22).

Three defensemen also return from last season's 14-12-1 squad — Jarrett Heyl (1, 11), Logan Visser (2, 8) and Grant Newman (5 assists). Goaltender Carter Manthorne (6-3, 3.15 GAA), who had 28 saves in a first-round 3-2 upset over third-seeded Dubuque, also comes back.

LeGree is excited about the squad's potential. He's considered several line combinations, one centered by Chase Lewison that would include right winger Nick Novak and either of two left wings, Max Beller and Joe Erickson.

Lewison had 11 goals and four assists last season for MHSHL Central Division cellar-dweller Ames. Erickson, back after a two-year absence from the sport, could also line up at the same position with Josh Menzenburg on another line that features center Taylor Frerichs and right wing Sam Chadwick.

LeGree said defenseman Walter Werden can also play forward. Christian Peterson will also play on the blue line, while Blake Beller and Will Stokes provide goaltender depth for a squad that went 2-2 at last weekend's Omaha Showcase where it split two games (15-1 win, 4-3 loss) against Wichita, Kansas, rallied for a 3-2 win over Sioux Falls and lost 6-0 to Denver.

"Both our varsity and junior varsity went 2-2," said LeGree. "Both teams really impressed me. I liked what I had seen. Even on our JV, we have smart hockey players there."

"The key for us is staying focused and working hard together as a unit. I've talked to the boys and told them we can't have any distractions off the ice. I've seen it in practice, how they attend practice and be attentive. My assistant coaches, Dale (Frerichs) and Mike (Manthorne) have great ideas. We're all going to work to make sure we move this team in the right direction."



**Frerichs**