

Leadership, determination key for Metros' leading scorer

Senior is a two-year captain for first-place team

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SIOUX CITY – James Page was a force on the football field and he is even more so on a sheet of ice.

The East High senior is one of the top forwards on a Metros hockey team that is currently in the midst of a 10-game win streak.

Page uses his strong work ethic, as described by Metros head coach Dave LeGree, as the captain of the Metros team that is in first place in the Midwest High School Hockey

METRO ATHLETE OF THE WEEK

James Page

Metros, Hockey

WHY: East High senior scored two goals in each game as Metros swept a two-game weekend series with Ames.

FYI: Contributed 23 solo tackles and 26 assisted stops while also rushing for 276 yards during the Black Raiders football season.



League with a 14-1-1 record.

"His hard work (sticks out)," said LeGree, in his fourth season as head coach. "When he gets on the ice, it's a constant go-go-go. He knows how to protect the puck.

He is just a strong right forward, he can bull his way into the corners.

"He's a bull, he just keeps going and going, he wears you down that's what he does and he has he

determination to keep going."

LeGree estimates that Page, along with senior linemates Connor Sand (MMCRU) and Drake Beller (North), will spend nearly half of a 51-minute game on the ice.

Page, the Sioux City Journal's Metro Athlete of the Week, has a team-high 17 goals this season through 16 games while his five game-winning goals, and three short-handed goals lead the entire MWHSHL.

"Our line, we're not all individuals, we're playing together," said Page. "None of us are scared to go into the corners and get dirty.

"It's been nice, we started last year pretty hot, but it's even better

this year."

The son of Dave and Staci Page had a pair of two-goal games as the Metros swept a two-game weekend series at Ames this past weekend that catapulted them into first place. He had both game-winning goals in 6-2 and 4-0 wins that has pushed the Metros goal count to 73 as a team, tied with Omaha for tops in the league.

"Good defense, we didn't give up too many goals," said Page. "Our line is just working well, we just find the open dude."

LeGree has coached for over 30 years at various levels throughout hockey in Sioux City and the

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Metro

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former Sioux City Muskeeteer has seen Page develop into one of the best players he has ever coached.

"His biggest thing is how he leads the team," said LeGree of his two-year captain. "I go to him and say 'hey you need to speak to this person, especially talking to the young players; I have a young line of freshmen and sophomores, they fit right in, they compete against the older kids.

"I look at Kevin Lohry (a past Metros star) and I look at James. He was probably one of the best kids I ever coached and I'm not talking about hockey, I'm talking about as a leader. I kind of put him in the same class because I ask him this needs to be done, we're teaching them about life."

Page, a four-year varsity performer, is one of seven seniors on this year's team that has placed third and second, respectively, at the state tournament the last two seasons. Page contributed 27 goals and 27 assists on last year's state runner-up squad.

"In my eyes I took these seniors, I started with them at PeeWee," said LeGree. "I have watched James develop into one of the top players on the team, develop that understanding of the game, good work ethic. I watched him take charge when he got into high school when I took the team over I brought that group up.

"I have watched James grow into being a solid hockey player and solid leader. The biggest thing I respect is watching a kid

grow and maturing into a man, because that's where he is now."

After coming up just short of the first state title since 2003 for a Metros team that has won six in total, Page has seen a big push coming into this season, along with added depth, that has allowed them the fast start to the season.

"Getting second last year, everybody was expecting to get first, and when we didn't everybody was ready to come back firing (this year)," said Page. "We have an all-rookie line, those guys just play great together. It's easy to not have to rely on one or two lines to score when we have all three lines putting in work and getting the puck in the net.

"It's all about teamwork, if you know what you're doing and that your teammates are going to do their job, you just have to rely on each other."

Teamwork that Page and the Metros hope will lead to adding another banner at the IBP Ice Center.

SPECIAL MENTION

Wrestling

Easton Graff, Sergeant Bluff-Luton.... Junior improved to 27-2 by winning the 138 pound weight class at the Perry Invitational after knocking off Class 3A top-ranked Deville Dentis of Des Moines East in the final.

Boys Basketball

Elijah Hazekamp, Bishop Heelan.... Senior poured in a career-high 38 points, hitting 12 of 14 free throws, while also pulling down 10 rebounds in a double overtime setback to Council Bluffs Abraham Lincoln.