

Metros aim: Improve record

By Russ Ward

Journal sports writer

The Sioux City hockey Metros paraded before the media Thursday with hopes high and a "thumbs up" attitude.

"There's no doubt but that we hope to improve on last season's 7-11 record," says head coach Dave LeGree, a former Musketeer goaltender. He'll be assisted by Steve Boyle, another ex-Muskie.

"We have three comparable lines, and a good defense," LeGree says. "If there's a weakness, perhaps, it may be at goal where we lost Brett Kieler and Juha Seipajarvi." Seipajarvi was a foreign exchange student from Finland who attended West High.

Testing out at that important position are Mark Laurent, Nick Ridenour and Chris Engel.

"Right now they're (the goalies) about on a par," LeGree says. "We need game action to find out just where they stand." Laurent is a junior from North, Ridenour a freshman, also from North, and Engel a junior from Heelan.

They'll get it (game experience) in the next couple of weeks when the season opens at home Saturday (3:30

p.m.) against Mason City. West Des Moines Valley/Dowling then will invade on Dec. 3. All home games will be played in the Marina Inn Convention Center which has a near-regulation size 85 by 185-foot rink.

There are eight returnees, including the veteran line of Ted O'Brien, Chap Cuthbert and Mick Emerick.

"I wouldn't call them our No. 1 line," warns LeGree, "but they do have the experience. Our other two lines are very good, too."

The 18-player roster represents the four city schools plus Sergeant Bluff-Luton, where veteran defenseman Bryan Swartzel does his studies.

Half the members (9) are from North, while four are from East, and two each from Heelan and West.

It's a young club numbering only four seniors — forwards O'Brien, Doug Richou and Cuthbert and defenseman Marcel Van Eijck, another foreign exchange student attending North. He's from Holland.

There are eight juniors, two sophomores and four freshmen.

Returning letterwinners are forwards Cuthbert, O'Brien, Richou, Ben Johnson, Kirk Swanson and Emerick and defensemen Rob

Casper and Swartzel.

Waterloo Public dominated the 10-team league last winter, sweeping both the regular-season (17-1) and state tournament titles.

LeGree is hopeful the league will be better balanced this season. Pre-season favorites appear to be Waterloo Public, Des Moines Public and Urbandale.

The merger of West Des Moines Valley and Dowling has reduced the league to nine members. Teams will play each other twice.

Most home games will be begin at 3:30 p.m., but three have been set for 7:30.

METRO ROSTER

Goalies: Mark Laurent, North, jr.; Nick Ridenour, North, fresh.; Chris Engel, Heelan, jr.

Defense: Brad Kieler, North, fresh.; Bryan Swartzel, Sergeant Bluff-Luton, jr.; Rob Casper, North, soph.; Marcel Van Eijck, North, sr.; Mark Schmith, East, soph.

Forwards: Kirk Swanson, West, jr.; Mick Emerick, Heelan, jr.; Shane Roi, East, jr.; Ted O'Brien, North, sr.; Ben Johnson, North, jr.; Chris Burton, East, fresh.; Troy Levich, East, jr.; Doug Richou, West, sr.; Tom O'Brien, North, fresh.; Chap Cuthbert, North, sr.

SCHEDULE

November: 19, Mason City (3:30).
December: 3, WDM Valley/Dowling (3:30); 10, at Waterloo Public (7:30 p.m.); 11, at Mason City (2 p.m.); 17, DM Public (7:30 p.m.)

January: 6, at Urbandale (8 p.m.); 7, at Ames (7:30 p.m.); 14, at WDM Valley/Dowling (8 p.m.); 15, at DM Public (6:45 p.m.); 21, Urbandale (3:30 p.m.); 28, Waterloo Columbus (7:30 p.m.)

February: 4, at Waterloo Columbus (7:30 p.m.); 5, at Dubuque (11:30 a.m.); 18, Waterloo Public (7:30 p.m.); 19, Dubuque (3:30 p.m.); 25, Ames (3:30 p.m.)

March: 1-4: State tournament at Waterloo.