

Prep hockey coach in search of a goalie

By Jeff Tecklenburg
Sports Editor

MASON CITY — If John Loyd finds a dependable goalie, he feels his Mason City prep hockey club can equal or better its performance of last season.

And since the campaign of a year ago — 14-10 overall record, third place in the league and fifth in the state tournament — was the best in the club's history, that makes the outlook promising.

"My main concern is finding a goalie," said Loyd, who last season became the Mason City team's first certified coach. Last year also was the Mohawks' first in the North Iowa Recreational Arena, their initial indoor home.

Gone from the roster is first-team all-state goaltender John Rosenfeld, and only inexperienced underclassmen are available as replacements.

"We're trying three," said Loyd. "Jeff Curtis, a sophomore, and Doug Tarr, a freshman, are the leaders right now."

Other graduation losses were all-state defenseman David Beard and Eric Held, who had 10 goals and 15 assists.

Otherwise, "Of our top three forward lines from last year, we lost only two players," said Loyd. "Our team will be fairly young, and we'll probably have two freshman defensemen on the varsity."

Altogether, a dozen veterans are back from last year, including the top two goal scorers — brothers Dana and David Despenas.

David scored 15 goals and made eight assists while Dana had 12 goals and 10 assists.

Other veterans are defenseman Steve Hansen, junior; Scott Swanson, senior; Matt Pete, sophomore; and George Pappajohn, junior; and forwards Jon Pete, senior; Jim Lloyd, junior; Todd Thelen, senior; Dirk Courrier, junior; Chris Stewart, soph; and Mitch Lees, senior.

A total of 35 players in grades 9-12 are out with three from Clear Lake, and the remainder from Mason City.

Loyd said he probably won't put the Despenas twins in the same forward line.

"Dana is a center and David is a wing. We'll probably put David with center Jim Lloyd, who is left-handed and can get the puck to him easier. It should help balance out our scoring."



John Loyd

"We've also got enough depth to carry four lines..."

Injury already has sidelined one veteran. Pete is out until early December with a broken thumb. Also, a carryover disciplinary action will keep Stewart and Courrier out of the first three games.

Des Moines Public was the league regular-season and playoff champ last year but Loyd figures Waterloo Public and Ames are the ones to beat this season.

"I think, if we develop a goalie, we can be in the top three," he said.

The IHSHL includes seven teams this year, compared to nine a year ago. Dubuque dropped out to play against closer Wisconsin and Illinois teams while Urbandale merged with Des Moines Public.

The Mohawks also will play two of the traditionally stronger teams in Minnesota — Farmington, where Loyd coached previously, and Lakeville.

Mason City opens its regular season at home Saturday against Waterloo Columbus.

League jamboree

Mason City was to be the first IHSHL jamboree the past weekend. No team scores were kept but each team had several scrimmages in game-like conditions.

"It was a real success," said Loyd, who, along with Ames coach Noel Erickson, originated the idea. "All the coaches seemed to like it and the teams got to play a lot of players."

The schedule

- Nov. 24 — Waterloo Columbus, home Nov. 29 — Waterloo Public, home
- Dec. 6 — Ames, home Dec. 13 — Farmington, Minn., away Dec. 15 — Des Moines Valley Dealing, home Dec. 22 — Des Moines Public-Urbandale, away Dec. 29-31 — Mason City Holiday Tournament.
- Jan. 5 — Des Moines-Urbandale, home Jan. 11 — West Public, away Jan. 15 — Ames, away Jan. 19 — LaCrosse, Wis., away Jan. 26 — Sioux City, away
- Feb. 2 — LaCrosse, home Feb. 9-10 — LaCrosse tournament, Feb. 16 — Waterloo Columbus, away Feb. 22 — Waterloo Dealing, away Feb. 22 — Sioux City, home.
- *Iowa High School Hockey League game.

Lake, posted a 621 series in games of 204, 217 and 200. It was her first 600 series.

Ward totaled 619 in the Suburban league at the River City Bowl in Mason City. She added games of 214 and 189. It was the first 600 series of the season for Ward, who holds a 174 average.

Kieslich bowled a 616 in the Family Mixed league at the River City Bowl with games of 245, 166 and 205. It was the first 600 series for Kieslich, who is carrying a 175 average.

field to Austin's 46

The Warriors will play in the NIACC Classic in Mason City on Friday and Saturday.

AUSTIN 39 — Haddock 1, Stevey 2, Beech 2, Skapron 10, Minihun 18, Lahrn 4, Cane 7, Dushik 2, WALDOFF 41 — Dan Johnson 8, Jeff Pierce 9, Dan Owens 2, Jeff Dook 16, Rick Sowers 11, Steve Bartleson 17, Randy Scott 4.



Goal in mind

Dana Despenas of the Mason City high school hockey team prepares to fire a shot during a recent practice session. Despenas is one of the veter-

erans returning for coach John Loyd's club. (Staff photo by Ken Lee)

Thoughts from Thermogas



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