

Metro icers head to state tourney

Warriors, Columbus out to get hockey title back

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Sports Writer

Not often over the past nine years has Waterloo been in the position of trying to wrestle the Iowa state high school hockey championship back into the city's fold.

But that will be the case this weekend when the Waterloo Warriors and Columbus Sailors trek to the Des Moines Ice Arena for the three-day state tournament.

Des Moines Public captured last year's state championship at Waterloo's McElroy Auditorium and the best finish by either local team was a third by the Warriors.

That made Des Moines, which then merged with state runnerup Urbandale, one of the pre-season favorites, but that team went just 6-6 over the regular Iowa High School Hockey League season.

Instead, Ames has emerged as the team to beat, posting a 9-2-1 record

on the way to Des Moines. The Little Cyclones split their two games with the Warriors and were tied by Columbus.

The format for this year's tournament is unique—something of a round robin system.

Each team plays twice Friday with the top teams in the league drawing teams that finished below them in the final standings. Games begin at 8 a.m. and end around midnight. The schedule is the same Saturday when four more games will be played.

For example, Ames will have played 5-7 record Sioux City, 5-7 Valley-Dowling, and 1-11 Mason City before championship play Sunday. Waterloo's Warriors will have played the same three foes while Columbus will have faced Mason City, Urbandale and Sioux City.

Sunday, points will be totaled with wins worth two points and ties worth

GAMES FRIDAY
8 a.m.—Ames (9-2-1) vs. Sioux City (5-7-0)
10:15 a.m.—Warriors (9-3-0) vs. Valley-Dowling (5-7-0)
12:30 p.m.—Columbus (6-5-1) vs. Mason City (1-11-0)
2:45 p.m.—Urbandale (6-6-0) vs. Sioux City
5 p.m.—Ames vs. Valley-Dowling
7:15 p.m.—Warriors vs. Mason City
9:30 p.m.—Columbus vs. Urbandale
GAMES SATURDAY
9 a.m.—Warriors vs. Sioux City
11:15 a.m.—Ames vs. Mason City
1:30 p.m.—Urbandale vs. Valley-Dowling
3:45 p.m.—Columbus vs. Sioux City

one point. The teams will be placed in order of their points. In case of ties, placing will be determined by final IHSHL standings or further tiebreakers.

Three games are then scheduled for Sunday morning before the placing games begin at 1:30. The championship game is slated for 6 p.m.

Waterloo's Warriors were the last metro team to have a grip on the state title, winning in 1983 when the tournament was held at Mason City. The Warriors also won the 1980 league title.

Columbus, meanwhile, has five state championships, the most recent in 1982.

Both teams will have just two days rest after playing a physical game to

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conclude the IHSHL season Tuesday at McElroy Auditorium.

The Warriors won that game 8-1 to avenge an earlier 7-6 loss to the Sailors and finish 9-3 in league play to Columbus' 6-5-1. Columbus may have lost more than the game, however, as Chris Dolan suffered a possible shoulder separation.

The keys, as the coaches see them, for a successful title bid by their teams, are enthusiasm and puck movement.

"I hope we can stay on this high through the weekend," said the Warriors' Dave Swick after his team's solid win Tuesday. "We were ready to play tonight."

For Columbus, Coach Jim Smith figures his team has to do what it didn't do against the Warriors—pass the puck.

"We've got to forget about this game, have two practices and go on to state," said Smith. "I hope they get it in their heads that the way they win is by passing the puck."