

# *Metros face Valley-Dowling in state hockey tournament*

The Sioux City Metros begin play today in the Iowa High School Hockey League state tournament at Ames, hoping to improve on a fourth-place finish of a year ago.

Coach Barry Head's team finished third this winter in the seven-team IHSHL's regular-season standings with a 9-9 record. Ames was the runaway champion at 17-1 and the Waterloo Warriors claimed second at 14-4.

The first of three games today matches the Waterloo Warriors against Waterloo Columbus at 3 o'clock.

The Metros take on West Des Moines Valley-Dowling around 5:30, then Mason City meets Des Moines-Urbandale in the final game, starting about 8 o'clock.

Ames draws a first-round bye, facing the winner of tonight's final game at 5:30 on Friday. The winners in today's first two games play at 8 o'clock Friday while the losers play at 3 o'clock.

The tournament concludes on Saturday.

The Metros have won five of their last six games and claim three victories in four meetings with Valley-Dowling. However, Valley-Dowling is the only team to defeat Ames this season, notching a 3-2 win on Feb. 16.

The only seniors on the Metro roster are scoring leader Rob Casper plus Mark Schmith and Kirk McKnight.

Casper and Schmith, sidelined by the flu, were both forced to miss the team's final practice session held Wednesday in Sioux Falls.

Casper has totaled 27 points on a team-high 17 goals plus 10 assists. Close behind with 25 points each are Mark Graber and Steve Nichol, then Brian Burke is next with 23.

Burke ranks second in goal scoring with 13, Graber has 12 and Nichol 11.

Scott Patrick has been the goalie for all but one Metro decision this season and compiled a solid 3.71 goals-against average.

The Metros are 12-13-0 for all games.