

Metros host state tourney

By Steve Allspach

Journal sports writer

The Sioux City Metros hope to match the good fortune of the Sioux City Musketeers in this weekend's Iowa High School Hockey League state tournament at City Auditorium.

Last year, the Musketeers hosted — for the first time — and won the national Junior "A" hockey championship at the Auditorium.

The Metros are hosting the state high school tournament for the first time and will take a 9-7-2 record into a first-round game Friday night at 6 o'clock against West Des Moines Valley-Dowling, which sports an 8-9-1 record.

In accordance with the recently-adopted IHSHL procedure of moving the state tournament to different sites around the state, Sioux City will not host the tourney again for at least five years.

"We're extremely excited about the tournament," said Metros first-year Coach Jim Coyle. "Frankly, we feel we have as good a shot as anybody to win the championship, but we

Prep hockey

are also excited about the tournament being in Sioux City for the first time.

"There have been a ton of people behind the scenes preparing for this thing."

The Sioux City team is made up of players from East, Heelan, North, West and Sergeant Bluff-Luton.

Mason City won the regular-season championship, followed by Waterloo Public and Waterloo Columbus, but the Metros led the league defensively, allowing just 46 goals.

All-star goaltender Scott Patrick played a big role in the meticulous Sioux City defensive work. Patrick will be backed up in goal by Jeremy Lund.

Kelly Goozman, a right winger now playing on a line with centerman Chris Swanson and left winger Brian Burke, is the leading Sioux City goal scorer with 13. Goozman also has three assists and 16 points to share team leadership in scoring.

Swanson has two goals and 14 assists and Burke seven goals and eight assists.

The second Metro line features Mark Graber at center and Duane Erickson and Todd Coyle on wing. Graber has four goals, 11 assists and 15 points, while Coyle has five goals and nine assists and Erickson six goals and seven assists.

Coach Coyle has recently shifted defenseman Steve Nichol to center

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TOURNAMENT PAIRINGS

Friday

Game #1 (1 p.m.) — Waterloo Public School Warriors (12-6-0) vs. Ames (2-16-0); Game #2 (3:30) — Waterloo Columbus (11-6-3) vs. Urbandale (5-12-1); Game #3 (6:00) — Sioux City (9-7-2) vs. West Des Moines Valley-Dowling (8-9-1); Game #4 (8:30) — Mason City (13-4-1) vs. Game #1 loser

Saturday

Game #5 (10:30 a.m.) — Game #2 loser vs. Game #3 loser (non-placers game); Game #6 (1 p.m.) — Waterloo Public-Ames winner vs. Waterloo Columbus-Urbandale winner; Game #7 (3:30) — Sioux City Valley-Dowling winner vs. Game #4 winner

Sunday

Game #8 (8 a.m.) — Game #4 loser vs. Game #2 loser (non-placers game); Game #9 (10:30 a.m.) — Game #3 loser vs. Game #4 loser (non-placers game); Game #10 (1 p.m.) — Third-place consolation game; Game #6, Game #7 losers; Game #11 (3:30 p.m.) — Championship game

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Tourney banquet slated Saturday

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where he pairs with Kyle Clafin and Tom O'Brien on a third line.

Chad McCormick and Brian Reynolds make up the first shift on defense and the second defense line features probably the biggest high school hockey player in the country in 6-foot-5, 250-pound Mike Scott and Mike Swartzel.

The Metros have lost to Valley-Dowling, 4-2, and beaten their first-round foe 6-3 and 6-1.

Outside of losses to Mason City and two Waterloo teams, the Metros are 9-1-2 against the rest of the league.

Mason City, the league regular-season champion, will intently watch the tournament's opening game Friday (1 p.m.) between the Waterloo Public School Warriors and last-place Ames.

Mason City, 13-4-1 in regular-season play, will play the Ames-Waterloo Public loser in an 8:30 p.m. contest.

The Warriors finished second in league play with a 12-6-0 record and 24 points. Mason City won the league with 27 points.

The second game Friday at 3:30 matches Waterloo Columbus and Urbandale. Columbus took third in the league standings with an 11-6-1 record and 23 points, while Urbandale finished sixth in the seven-team league with a 5-12-1 record and 11 points.

Should the Metros get past Valley-Dowling, the winner of the Mason City/Waterloo Public-Ames winner, would be the next foe in a Saturday game at 3:30 p.m.

In addition to the 11 tournament games in the three-day classic at City Auditorium, the Sioux City Musketeers will host second-place Thunder Bay in a United States Hockey League contest at City Auditorium Saturday night at 7:30.

The Musketeers initiate a busy weekend on Auditorium ice Thursday night with a crucial USHL game against visiting Des Moines. The Musketeers need to win both of their final two regular-season games to retain the possibility of finishing fourth in the league standings, thus earning the home ice advantage for the first post-season playoff series.

The Waterloo Public School Warriors are led by league scoring

champ Marc Gillard, who attends Waterloo West High School. Gillard, who had 28 goals, 28 assists and 56 points with one game remaining, is the son of former Denver University and Waterloo Black Hawks stand-out Miles Gillard.

Miles Gillard and Sioux City Coach Jim Coyle were Black Hawk teammates in the pre-Junior "A" USHL days.

Coyle played collegiate hockey at the University of Michigan.

The tournament will follow a single-elimination format to determine the top four teams receiving official awards recognition.

However, teams losing games other than in the semifinals and finals will be paired in three contests — one at 10:30 a.m. Saturday and at 8 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. Sunday — to determine fifth, sixth and seventh place.

The tournament banquet will be held Saturday night (7 o'clock) in the Auditorium basement. League all-star players and outstanding students, among others, will be honored at the banquet.

The Metros haven't been able to practice since closing out the regular season with a 4-3 win over Ames Feb. 22.

However, Coyle's skaters journeyed to Sioux Falls last Wednesday and defeated the best Sioux Falls high school club team in an exhibition game, 3-1. At that time, the Sioux Falls club boasted a 12-0 league record.

The Metros will skate today from 4 p.m. to 5:30 at the Auditorium and again Thursday at 5 p.m.

Mike O'Brien is the tournament director and has had a legion of volunteer help in organizing the tournament, including Dick Keith, who is the vice-president of the Iowa High School Hockey League.

Tourney officials are promoting a special three-day advanced admission pass costing \$10 for adults (\$6 at the door) and \$5 for students (\$2 at the door). The special passes can be purchased at the East, West, North and Sergeant Bluff-Luton High School, at the Musketeers office in the Auditorium and at Sportsman's downtown and at Southern Hills Mall.

A one-day pass is \$5 for adults and \$3 for students and single game tickets are \$4 for adults and \$2 for students.