

State high school hockey tournament a toss-up

By **DOUG NEWHOFF**
Courier Sports Writer

Waterloo's two high school hockey teams rate as good a chance as any when the 11th annual Iowa state hockey tournament opens in Sioux City tomorrow.

The Waterloo Warriors and Columbus Sailors finished 2-3 in the final Iowa High School Hockey League standings behind regular-season champion Mason City. The Warriors ended 12-6, Columbus 11-6-1.

This year's tournament is a tossup. Ames is the defending champion, having defeated the Waterloo Warriors 7-4 in last year's championship game, but the Little Cyclones finished last during the regular season.

Mason City won the league, but the Mohawks lost twice to Columbus and defeated the Warriors, 3-2, for the regular-season title in overtime.

Sioux City, 9-7-2 during the season, has excellent goaltending in Scott Patrick, a balanced and deep offensive attack and a home-ice advantage.

Nor can Valley-Dowling and Urbandale be counted out. Valley won some big games during the regular season, as did Urbandale, including a 7-6 victory over the Warriors.

"At any time, anybody could knock you off," says Warriors Coach Dave Swick.

"I really think any one of the top four teams has an excellent opportunity," adds Columbus Coach Mike Brown.

THE WARRIORS open play Friday at 1 p.m. against Ames. The winner of that game moves into Saturday's semifinals while the loser plays Mason City Friday night.

In effect, then, the loser of that opening game could theoretically come back and win the state tournament championship.

Columbus debuts at 3:30 p.m. Friday against Urbandale.

"Urbandale scares me to death right now," says the Sailors' Brown, in his third season. Brown's previous two teams and the one before those did not win a state tournament game.

Columbus features the top regular-season goaltender in senior Pat Lanigan (91.6 save percentage) and the league's second-leading scorer in sophomore Brian Wehr (49 points and 23 goals). The Sailors also are deep defensively.

"I'm happy with the way we're playing," says Brown. "I think we're ready to go. I think good goaltending is gonna be the big key."

Brown also expects the tight-checking teams to fare well in the small Sioux City rink.

"We've never played anybody besides Sioux City over there," he says. "Mason City is big and strong and they bump you. I think we can be effective in that rink. We don't mind playing along the boards. If we play smart in front of our own goal, we'll be fine."

SWICK SAYS the Warriors are also ready to play.

"I'm sure we were disappointed (losing the regular-season title to Mason City), because we had some real good chances to win it. We seem to have come out of it okay.

"We've had some pretty good practices this week."

As for the Sioux City ice, Swick says his team can adjust.

"We've played pretty well over there," he says. "I haven't heard a lot of complaints from the kids when we've played there. It's the same old story. Everybody has to play there."

The Warriors will put three of the league's top four scorers on the ice at the same time in linemates Marc Gillard, Tom Meyer and Del Donaldson. Gillard, the scoring champion, finished with 58 points, Meyer with 41 and Donaldson with 39.

In the history of the state tournament, seven regular-season champions have added the state tourney title to their take.

Columbus has won four state tournament titles, the Warriors three and Valley-Dowling, Des Moines Public and Ames one each.

Play continues through Saturday with semifinal games at 1 and 3:30 p.m. The championship game is scheduled for Sunday afternoon at 3:30, following a 1 p.m. matchup for third place.

Final IHSHL Standings

	W	L	T	Pts.	GF	GA	PN	PIM
Mason City	13	4	1	27	83	55	141	326
Wat. Warriors	12	6	0	24	88	59	134	314
Wat. Columbus	11	6	1	23	79	49	110	230
Sioux City	9	7	2	20	61	46	72	144
Valley-Dowling	8	9	1	17	70	77	139	294
Urbandale	5	12	1	11	69	114	121	316
Ames	2	16	0	4	57	108	96	219

Final Scoring Leaders

	GP	Pts	G	A	PP	SH	PN	PIM
Gillard (W'loo)	18	58	28	30	6	3	15	30
Wehr (Col)	18	49	23	26	5	1	21	44
Meyer (W'loo)	18	41	23	18	4	1	28	56
Donaldson (W'loo)	18	39	14	25	2	0	8	16
Thelen (MC)	18	36	17	19	0	5	16	42
Dale (Urb)	16	36	23	13	7	4	11	30
Conard (Urb)	18	34	13	21	7	0	1	2
Grob (VD)	16	31	8	23	1	1	10	20
Wirtjes (Col)	17	31	18	13	3	0	9	18
Dressen (VD)	17	31	18	13	3	1	11	22

Other Local Players

Bloom (Col)	18	28	11	17	2	1	7	14
Bunger (W'loo)	17	13	6	7	1	0	16	42
McFarland (W'loo)	18	12	6	6	1	1	8	16
Bixby (W'loo)	18	12	3	9	1	0	21	42
Weidner (Col)	17	12	6	6	0	0	5	10
Nilsson (Col)	15	11	3	8	1	0	2	4
N.Lanigan (Col)	16	11	7	4	2	0	7	14

Final Goaltending Leaders

	GP	W-L-T	SOG	Svs.	GA	PP	SH	Pct.
Lanigan (Col)	15	9-5-1	466	427	39	12	2	91.6
Patrick (SC)	18	9-7-2	479	433	46	11	7	90.4
Curtis (MC)	18	13-3-1	513	462	51	20	3	90.1
Gibson (VD)	11	4-6-0	288	249	39	10	0	86.5
Ames (W'loo)	18	12-6-0	399	344	55	18	5	86.2