

Metro icers open campaign today

By Steven Allspach
Journal sports writer

It may not be Philadelphia's "Legion of Doom" line, but Coach Jim Peck is counting on Walt Johnson, Mike Stoneburg and Trent Mozak to create some havoc during the 1995-96 high school hockey season.

The Sioux City Metros trio comprise Peck's No. 1 line as the team prepares for its Iowa High School Hockey League season debut in games today and Sunday at Sioux City Auditorium.

"We've got some young kids, guys just out of bantams, and we didn't look so hot three weeks ago," said Peck, "but we've shown some real improvement lately.

"It's to the point where I'm excited and encouraged about what we can accomplish this season.

"We lost some very good hockey players to graduation and other things so we're definitely in a rebuilding stage, but our best hockey should come in January."

Peck begins his third season as head coach.

The Metros were 15-9 last season following a five-year run of domination in the IHSHL. The Metros won the 1994 state tournament, finished second in 1993, won titles in 1991 and 1992 and were second in 1990.

"We didn't reach the championship game in a long time last season and we'd like to get back to that," said Peck, a former Sioux City Musketeers player.

The Musketeers finished fifth in the state tournament last season.

Johnson, the son of another former Musketeer, Walt Johnson Sr., will center a line with Mozak and Stoneburg on the wings.

"This line has to carry us. It has to score goals," said Peck, who considers Johnson one of the league's premier players, along with Stoneburg.

Stoneburg was selected to the Chicago Showcase all-star series last season after scoring 27 goals to finish as the No. 3 scorer on the team with 28 points.

Johnson had four goals and 11 assists. Stoneburg is a senior at North and Johnson is junior at North.

Mozak is a freshman at East.

"The combination of Johnson's intuition on the ice, Stoneburg's tough, physical style and Mozak's presence and skills for a freshman is very promising," said Peck. "They can all score."

The Metros played nine pre-season games, going 3-4-2.

The encouraging part of that, though, is a 3-0-2 mark after an 0-4 start.

Peck reconstruction project includes finding a replacement in goal for graduated Jeff Sewalson (7-4) and Dirk Worner (7-5).

Worner, a 6-foot-5, 207-pound North junior, has played both hockey and basketball in the past, but has opted to concentrate on basketball.

"Losing Dirk was a big loss, but it's so difficult to play both," said Peck. "He decided on basketball, but

he's an outstanding goaltender."

The No. 1 goaltender will be Damon Keith, a North junior, who picked up experience last year at the junior varsity level.

Peck has switched veteran forward Sam Kincaid to defense.

"Sam is very key to what we can accomplish," said Peck. "He'll be out there on the power play, penalty kill and take a regular shift, too." Kincaid, a senior at Homer High School, had five goals and five assists last season.

Brent Suing, Nick Mills, Jarad Berg, Matt LeGree and Jason Augustine are other counted on as defensemen.

Augustine, though, will be unavailable until late December while recovering from a broken arm suffered during the football season. Augustine's a junior at Heelan.

Other major graduation losses were league all-stars Mark Doren, Chris Hedquist, Nate Kelly, Josh Strong and Seth Schramm. Doren led the team with 45 points and 23 goals last season.

Kelly had 17 goals and 22 points.

Other forwards battling for ice time are Matt Munger, Matt Andrews, Willie Persinger, Clint Stiles, Chresten Jensen and Jeff Kempter.

J.J. Archer, Kyle Worner, Chris Lohr, Jason Jeffords, Brandon Savard and Swedish foreign exchange student Dennis Schmidt could also vye for playing time.

There is one addition to the league this season.

With the Kansas City Junior Blades moving into the league, a divisional setup has been established.

Ames, Des Moines, Dubuque, Mason City and Waterloo will comprise the Eastern Division and Sioux City, St. Joseph, Mo., Kansas City and the Omaha Gladiators and Junior Lancers will make up the Western Division.

Metros Schedule

NOVEMBER: 11 - Dubuque, 12 - Dubuque, 16 - Kansas City, 19 - Kansas City, 24 - At Mason City, 25 - At Waterloo, 26 - At Mason City.

DECEMBER: 2 - At St. Joseph, Mo., 3 - At St. Joseph, Mo., 9 - At Watertown, S.D., 10 - At Watertown, S.D., 14 - At Omaha Gladiators, 17 - Omaha Gladiators, 22 - Sioux Falls.

JANUARY: 5 - At Des Moines, 6 - At Des Moines, 13 - St. Joseph, Mo., 14 - St. Joseph, Mo., 19 - Omaha Junior Lancers, 20 - Omaha Junior Lancers, 21 - At Omaha Gladiators, 26 - Ames, 27 - Ames, 28 - At Omaha Junior Lancers.

FEBRUARY: 4 - Waterloo, 10 - At Sioux Falls, 11 - Omaha Gladiators, 16 - At Omaha Junior Lancers, 24 - At Kansas City, 25 - At Kansas City.

MARCH: 1-3 - Junior varsity state tournament at Omaha, 7-10 - Varsity state tournament at Des Moines.

Note: All junior varsity games at home begin at 1 p.m. with the varsity contest following at 3 p.m.

Metros Roster

SENIORS: Dennis Schmidt, 5-8, 150, North, forward; Brandon Savard, 5-11, 175, Central Campus, forward; Jarad Berg, 6-0, 180, Akron-Westfield, defense; Mike Stoneburg, 5-9, 183, North, forward; J.J. Arthur, 5-8, 170, Heelan, forward; Sam Kincaid, 6-0, 170, Homer, defense; Jason Jeffords, 5-10, 145, East, forward.

JUNIORS: Ryan Goss, 5-11, 150, Heelan, defense; Josh Lundahl, 5-10, 165, East, defense; Matt Andrews, 5-10, 160, South Sioux City, forward; Walt Johnson, 5-7, 145, North, forward; Mark Munger, 6-1, 150, North, forward; Jason Augustine, 6-1, 170, Heelan, defense; Brett Frethe, 5-8, 200, East, forward; Damon Keith, 5-10, 170, North, goaltender.

SOPHOMORES: Nick Mills, 5-8, 160, North, defense; Chris Lohr, 5-11, 155, Heelan, forward; Clint Stiles, 5-7, 135, East, forward; Willie Persinger, 5-8, 165, North, forward; Chresten Jensen, 5-11, 157, North, forward; Mike Foreman, 6-3, 225, Sergeant Bluff/Luton, defense; Brent Suing, 5-9, 145, East, defense.

FRESHMEN: Matt LeGree, 5-7, 131, East, forward; Trent Mozak, 5-8, 140, East, forward; Jeff Kamotar, 5-10, 175, North, forward; Kyle Worner, 6-5, 155, North, forward; Jake Hinderham, 6-0, 200, East, goaltender.

EIGHTH GRADE: Ryan Dolmann, Hoover Middle School, goaltender.