

Mohawks look to 'peak' at state tourney

■ Mason City faces Sioux City in opener at 6:30 tonight.

BY TIM MASMAR
Of the Globe-Gazette

MASON CITY — The Mason City Mohawk Hockey Club finished the year 26-6 overall and 18-4 in the Iowa High School Hockey League. The conference record earned the Mohawks a second place finish.

However, you get the sense that even though the Mohawks are coming off of a very successful season, there is still something missing.

That missing piece could very well fall into place this weekend as the Mohawks open up the IHSHL Varsity State Tournament with a first-round game against the Sioux City Metros at 6:30 tonight in Sioux City.

The Mohawks are the second seed in the tournament,

behind the Des Moines Capitals, who play the Kansas City Blades at 11 this morning.

Should Mason City win, it will play the winner of the Omaha Gladiators - Dubuque Devils' matchup on Saturday. The championship game will be played at 1:30 p.m. on Sunday. Teams which



Paulsen

lose in the first two rounds will play for the remaining six places in the tournament.

"We have been playing some of our best hockey in the last half of the season," said Mason City head coach John Lloyd. "I just hope we can carry that over into the state tournament."

Mason City finished the season winning eight of its last nine games, with its only loss coming to the Capitals, 4-0 at

home. Before that streak, the Mohawks won 12 of 14 games with their only losses coming to always-tough Rochester and the Sioux City Metros.



Sorensen

"The Metros have two of the top scorers in the league and in the past we've concentrated on stopping them," said Lloyd. "We are also playing in their arena and they beat us in the last game between the two teams."

Preparing for this weekend's tournament has been difficult. All league clubs had the week off from competition in order to compete in the junior varsity state tournament and the All-Star game, which was hosted in Mason City.

Mason City chose to keep its regular practice schedule, while other coaches opted to

STATE PAIRINGS

TODAY'S GAMES

11 a.m. — Des Moines Capitals vs. Kansas City Jr. Blades
1:30 p.m. — Waterloo Warriors vs. Omaha Jr. Lancers.
4 p.m. — Omaha Gladiators vs. Dubuque Devils
6:30 p.m. — Sioux City Metros vs. Mason City Mohawks.

SATURDAY'S GAMES

1 p.m. — Capitals or Blades vs. Warriors or Lancers.
3:30 p.m. — Gladiators or Devils vs. Metros or Mohawks.

SUNDAY'S GAME

1:30 p.m. — Championship game.
— Games listed are championship bracket games only.

once this season, the Mohawks did beat the Metros twice during the regular season by the scores of 4-1 and 9-1. Jerry Springer totaled five goals during the two games and goalie Ramy AbuJobarah saved over 50 shots over the same two-game period.

In the one loss to the Metros, during the Mason City Winterfest Tournament, the Mohawks tied the score at 3-3 with a Will Price goal at the end of regulation, but they later lost in the shootout, 3-1.

"We have really been playing well together and we haven't really had a letdown all season," said junior Jake Sorensen, who along with AbuJobarah were two of the Mohawks' four All-Stars. "I think we are peaking right now and that's good going into the state tournament."

In order for the Mohawks to advance, Lloyd believes his team will have to "be aggressive and keep the puck deep in

take some time off.

"The week off might hurt us, but it might help," said Mason City senior Matt Paulsen, who scored a goal against the Metros earlier this year. "We are going into this pumped up and thinking big. The first-round game is definitely going to be tough one, so we are going to have to go out and really hustle."

Despite losing to Sioux City

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MOHAWKS

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the Metros offensive zone."

"Any team who expects to win this tournament is going

to have to have a little luck," said Lloyd. "Hopefully the time of day when we play is a plus for us. The night game is good for us because it let's us rest in our own beds on Thursday night and then leave for Sioux City early Friday morning."