

## STATE HOCKEY TOURNAMENT

# The end of a coaching era

□ Lloyd set to retire after 18 seasons as coach of the Mohawk Hockey Club.

By CHARLES EMERICK  
Of The Globe Gazette

John Lloyd and hockey go way back.

For the past 32 years, the Mason City Hockey Club coach has coached numerous teams of many different age groups.

He has spent the past 18 seasons as coach of the Mohawks.

But Sunday's state tournament game at the North Iowa Ice Arena will mark the last time Lloyd coaches from behind the Mohawks' bench.

After last season, on March 14, Lloyd announced he is retiring at the conclusion of the 2000-2001 season.

"Sometimes I don't even think about it," he said. "But sometimes I'm up late by myself and I start thinking about the things I'm going to miss. There are a lot of friends in and around the league — other coaches, I'll miss seeing them."

"There are a couple of arenas that I won't miss going to at all. But it's going to be different and I might find myself not knowing what to do with all my time," he added.

Lloyd's coaching days began in Anchorage, Alaska where he was an air traffic controller.

One evening, he walked to an outdoor rink near his residence to take in a hockey game, and that's when it all began.

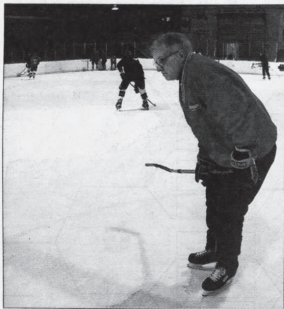
"I walked over there to watch a game — it was a Bantam game," Lloyd said, "and a guy came up to me and said, 'you wouldn't want to coach, would you?' He wanted me to coach the team playing. It was called the Police Association. That was their sponsor. I told him I could and I took over the team."

"It turned out to be a pretty good team and we won the city championship that year. And that's how I got started," he added.

Lloyd coached 12 years in Anchorage, moving up to an assistant coach at the high school level.

From there he transferred as an air traffic controller to Farmington, Minn.

"I coached the Pee Wee team for two years and the high school asked me to come in and be an assistant there," Lloyd said. "I took that job for two



KELLY WENGL/The Globe Gazette

Mason City coach John Lloyd skates with the Mohawks during Tuesday's practice. Lloyd is retiring at the end of the season after 18 years as head coach of the Mohawks.

years."

That's when his career began in Mason City.

Lloyd took the job as manager of the North Iowa Ice Arena in Feb. 1983, when the facility first opened.

Not long after that, he took over as head coach of the Mohawks.

During his 18 years as coach of the Mohawks, he has

coached teams to Iowa High School Hockey League titles in 1987 and 1997. He also had runner-up teams in 1993 and 1996.

He's been named the IHSHL Coach of the Year three times — 1987, 1993 and 1997.

Of 197 season remains as one of his most memorable moments.

"Our 1997 Mason City team

came from nowhere to win the state championship title," he said. "It was a very average team in the league throughout most of the season, and during the last three weeks of the season it started jelling."

"You could feel the confidence building. Their shots were crisper and harder and they began to play as a complete team. That state tournament was the most fun I've had in all my years as coaching," he added.

As the end of his coaching career nears, Lloyd said he will miss practices with the kids the most.

"We have fun at practice," he said. "We work hard, but yet they're fun. I look forward to practice sessions. That part I'll miss and I'll probably feel bad when I see them out there practicing and I'm not there."

Despite those feelings, don't expect Lloyd to have a sudden change in mind about coming back for more — at least as a head coach.

"I think I really would like to work with youth players," he said. "Maybe not as a coach, but just helping out."

Lloyd, the arena manager who spends much of his time there, said he needs to spend more time at the arena and it has kept him busier this year than it ever has.

One way to occupy more of his new-found time would be to open a new arena, something

Lloyd would like to see happen.

"I would push for us to have another facility so that we have that extra ice sheet that we definitely need," he said.

"Hopefully it would be open part of the summer. It would end up becoming a full-time job in the summer also, but it's something that we could use here."

## HANNA TO RETIRE

Lloyd is not the only Mohawk coach in his final season.

Mason City assistant coach Ron Hanna will also retire at the end of the season.

Like Lloyd, Hanna also has a long relationship with hockey.

Hanna has spent the last 30 years coaching hockey in Mason City,

with the last six years as a defensive coach for the Mohawks.

Hanna has also held many executive positions with the Mason City Youth Hockey Association, IHSHL and the United States Hockey League.

He was vice president of the Mason City Youth Hockey Association from 1980-81 and president from 1981-84.

Hanna was vice president of the IHSHL from 1977-84 and also vice president of the USHL.

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Hanna



*Good Luck Mohawks!*



## Retire

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from 1985-93. He was general manager of the North Iowa Huskies from 1984-88.

After all the years and the hard work Hanna put into the Mason City hockey programs, it's the kids that he'll miss the

most.

"The fun part of the whole thing is the kids," he said.

"Every one of them is unique. They're all learning and they're all growing up. Over the years we've had a bunch of great kids come through here."

"It's working with the kids that's the most fun. Some of them take advice better than

others, but that's fine. Somehow you get the message across and when you see them do it on the ice, that's the satisfaction," he added.

Hanna will still be involved with hockey after his retirement.

He will still be at the arena with his grand-kids, "teaching them the ropes."