

# High school hockey hits ice in Q-C

By Dearrel Bates  
QUAD-CITY TIMES

A high school hockey team is being added to the Quad-City sports scene.

The Quad-City Hockey Association announced Tuesday the formation of a high school-age hockey team that will compete

this season in the Iowa High School Hockey League. The team will be called the Quad-City Presidents.

Actually, the league's name is a misnomer. In addition to

teams from Dubuque, Waterloo, Ames, Mason City, Sioux City and two teams from Des Moines, there are two teams from Omaha, Neb., plus one from Kansas City, Mo., and Lincoln, Neb.

The Presidents' first game is Friday, Nov. 3, at the Omaha Lancers. The team moves on the next two days for a two-game series in Kansas City. The home debut is Saturday, Nov. 11, against the Des Moines Oak Leafs at the Quad-City Sports Center in Davenport.

Coaching the team will be Todd Woodcroft, the director of hockey development at the Sports Center. His assistant will be former Quad-City Mallards player Howie Rosenblatt, with Nick White, a former high school and collegiate player, handling the junior varsity squad.

"Tryouts for the team will start on Sunday," said Woodcroft, who played collegiate hockey at McGill University in Canada. "We will have about 70-75 players trying out, with 20 players eventually assigned to the varsity team and 20 to a junior varsity team."

"The majority of those 70-75 players are from the Iowa and Illinois Quad-City area. We have 3-4 players from Iowa City, one from Burlington and several others from outside the Quad-City region."

Hockey is not sanctioned by the Iowa High School Athletic Association. Still, the players in the league abide by the IHSA's rules, including eligibility regulations.

"Academics is one thing we are stressing, and our players will have to maintain a strong grade-point average," Woodcroft said. "Because this is a developmental league, college scholarships and possible advancement to junior hockey leagues are part of the goals of this program."

In addition to the announcement of the team logo and

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# Hockey: Q-C will have high school team

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schedule, several potential players were present to display the new team's blue and white home-and-away jerseys.

One of the players is Mike Martin, a senior at Bettendorf High School. He lived and played hockey in Waterloo until moving to the Quad-Cities when he was a freshman.

"My uncle was a coach in Waterloo and I dreamed of playing for him," Martin said. "When we moved to Bettendorf, I hoped eventually I could play for a Quad-City team in the high school league. Now it's become a reality."

"People will find play in the league very fast-paced. Teams score a lot of goals, but that doesn't mean there isn't good defense played. There's plenty of hitting and the games are pretty competitive."

While Martin grew up playing in hockey leagues, Nate King of East Moline — a junior at United Township — did the majority of his early skating playing pond hockey until the Sports Center opened in 1995.

"I got involved in leagues when the facility opened in Davenport and love the sport," said King, who played football and

## ► IOWA HIGH SCHOOL HOCKEY LEAGUE

**East Division** — Quad-City Presidents, Dubuque, Waterloo, Des Moines Oak Leafs, Mason City, Ames.

**West Division** — Sioux City, Omaha Lancers, Omaha Gladiators, Lincoln, Kansas City, Des Moines Capitals.

**Eligibility** — Both Illinois and Iowa high school-age players are eligible. Although not sanctioned by the Iowa High School Athletic Association, league follows the IHSA's eligibility guidelines. Rosters of 20 players on varsity and junior varsity.

**Schedule** — Q-C has a 28-game

schedule, 14 home games to be played at Quad-City Sports Center. All home games to be played on Saturday nights and Sunday afternoons; ticket prices are \$5 adults, \$2 for students, with season tickets available for \$50.

**Q-C coaching staff** — Todd Woodcroft (head coach); Howie Rosenblatt (assistant); Nick White (junior varsity).

**Sponsors** — President Riverboat and Black Hawk Hotel, Mississippi Valley Surgery Center, Landmark Properties, Wieblers Harley Davidson, National Publishers Inc.

baseball in junior high until giving up those sports just for hockey. "We played most of the teams in the league, plus some other club teams, last year, and we held our own."

"I think we wound up playing about 55 games and put a lot of time and effort into the team. Eventually, I'm hoping I can earn a hockey scholarship; there are plenty of colleges that have hockey as a sport, and the number seems to be growing."

Unlike previous years when players and parents had to

shoulder the cost of outfitting the participant, plus pick up the cost of traveling to various venues for competition, expenses for the team now will be paid.

"We're fortunate to have secured sponsors for our team so that players and parents won't be paying for the privilege of playing on the team," said Jim Thompson, the director of high school hockey at the Sports Center.

The sponsors include the President Riverboat and Black Hawk Hotel, Mississippi Valley

Surgery Center, Landmark Properties, Wieblers Harley Davidson and National Publishers, Inc.

"Actually, we're the first team in the league to get corporate sponsorship for our team," Woodcroft said. "We had to get permission from the other league members, and I think now you'll see the other teams doing the same. Before, the players and parents were absorbing the costs."

"We'll be traveling to games on a 55-passenger bus with both varsity and junior varsity players, coaches and other hockey team officials. Everybody involved with the team is putting a lot of time and effort into the program, and we're hoping the Quad-City community will support those efforts."

"There will be a bracketed postseason tournament, plus a midseason all-star game. Those events are heavily scouted by college and junior hockey coaches for the purpose of finding players."