

Youthful Warriors ready to open season Friday

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WATERLOO

Mike Brown isn't bemoaning the loss of his top three scorers or No. 1 goaltender from last year's Waterloo Warriors hockey team.

Rather, Brown is applauding the veterans who return and the youth he will call upon as Waterloo heads into the 2001-02 Iowa High School Hockey League season. The Warriors drop the puck for the first time Friday when they host Ames in a 7:45 p.m. varsity contest at Young Arena.

With the graduation of Ryan Shaw, Jared Boller and Josh Dicken, Waterloo lost 44 goals and 109 points from last year's squad. That's 50 percent of the team's goals and 82 percent of the Warriors' total scoring. In Zach Goodsell, Waterloo also lost a durable goalie who played every game and posted a .893 save percentage.

"We're going to be young, but

"We're young, but I think our skill at the freshman and sophomore level is as good as we've ever had."

Mike Brown

and sophomore levels is as good as we've ever had," said Brown, whose team is coming off a 13-13-2 season. "They're just going to have to score for us."

The Warriors have been auditioning three goaltenders - David Kral, Craig Arras and

"Right now, Andy appears to be the frontrunner, but we've got a lot of work to do there," said Brown. "That's a tough job."

Some of the offensive burden will fall on the shoulders of Shane Metz (20 points) and Bryan Brown (17 points) and Luke Langdale (9 points), along with Matt Metcalf and Jason Dobes, who excelled at the junior varsity level. Defensively, the Warriors will build around veterans Michael Fritts, Jeff Loftsgaarden and Peter Schneider.

The Warriors played an exhibition game at Mason City last weekend, dropping a 4-2 decision, but Brown saw reason to be encouraged.

"We didn't let any of our football players play," he noted. "So we considered that pretty successful. Mason City is big and strong."

Following Friday's season-opener against Ames, the Warriors hit the road Saturday to Quad Cities, which posted a 4-24 mark in its first season of