



Mason City's
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LUCKY SEVEN?

Mohawks open up today's tournament as No. 7 seed

By JEREMY KOENIGS
Of The Globe Gazette

URBANDALE — The Mohawk Hockey Club has relied on hard work to become a successful hockey program.

This season has been no exception as the Mohawks fought through ups and downs to finish with a 16-12-3-2 record.

"This time of year, I don't think your record is really important," Mason City coach Mark Hicks said. "We competed well throughout the year and have just as good of a chance as anyone to win it all."

Mason City's quest for the Midwest High School Hockey League title begins today as the seventh seed.

The Mohawks square off against the second-seeded Omaha Jr. Lancers (21-9-3-0) at 5 p.m. at the Metro Ice Sports Facility.

The Jr. Lancers are led by the league's top scorer in senior Jace Hough. The two-time all-star scored 33 of Omaha's 90 goals this season.

"He's scored over a third of their goals, so we have to be aware of where

Players to watch

► A look at the players to watch during the tournament. **Page B4**

he is on the ice," Hicks said. "We can't give him any easy chances and our guys have to get out on him."

Meanwhile, junior Chris Jessen led the Mohawks with 40 points (19 goals, 21 assists). The all-star tallied two hat tricks, both against the Des Moines Capitals.

Greg Hepperly and Spenser Poppinga are the second and third, respectively, in scoring with 36 and 28 points.

Garrett Hepperly, a two-time all-star, anchors the defense.

"There's not one guy we're going to ride," Hicks said. "Our nine forwards and five or six defensemen that we expect to play match up well against them."

In goal, the Mohawks will most likely see sophomore Josh Pijewski. The sophomore all-star posted a 15-4-1 record and four shutouts, including one against Mason City.

Lebreeze Lowery will get the starting

call for the Mohawks. The junior notched 16 victories, tied for third best in the league with Tyler Tunning of the Capitals.

"Lebreeze has played very well," Hicks said. "However, he'll be the first person to tell you that he is just one part of the team."

With a victory today, the Mohawks would meet either the third-seeded Quad City Blues or sixth-seeded Kansas City Jr. Outlaws in the semifinals on Saturday.

On the other side of the bracket is the top-seeded Des Moines Oak Leafs, who posted a record of 26-4-1-2.

Before the Mohawks look too far down the road, though, they must first get past the Jr. Lancers, who own two victories over the Mohawks (3-2 in overtime and 2-0).

The two teams tied 3-3 in their other meeting.

"I expect a hard-fought game," Hicks said. "We need to play our own game, getting the puck out of our zone and picking up checks."