

# Veteran Warriors get early test in league-power Capitals

By DOUG NEWHOFF  
Sports Editor

**WATERLOO** — Shawn Weinke has plenty of numbers on the ice.

Now, it's up to his Waterloo Warriors to put some crooked numbers on the scoreboard.

The Warriors drop the puck on their 2006-07 high school hockey season Friday at Young Arena. The Des Moines Capitals, one of the league's perennial powers, will provide the opposition in the 6:30 p.m. varsity contest.

Weinke is eager to see where his team stands after a month of practices.

"I'm excited to open against the Caps, and I think the guys are, too," said Weinke, whose team is coming off a 15-17-1 season that was good for seventh place in last year's Iowa High School Hockey League standings. "It will be nice to shoot for those guys right off the bat."

With 32 players in camp, including 13 who saw varsity action a year ago, Weinke likes the makeup of his squad.

"We should be strong on defense with Andrew Metcalf, Blake Miehe, Zach Hester and a couple of other guys who will fill in there," said Weinke. "It's always been my philosophy that

if you play good defense, you will be in every game. If we can limit quality shots, that's a good start, and with a strong defensive corps, we'll move forward from there."

Offensively, the Warriors return their top two scorers in Jake Irey (29 goals, 11 assists, 40 points) and Tyler Mahncke (9-19-28). Miehe contributed 12 points from his defensive post while Bryn Klein added 11 with six goals.

"Offensively, Irey is a sophomore, and he was in the league's top 10 in scoring last year," said Weinke. "Mahncke had some points last year, too. Our first two lines will be all veteran guys who have had some experience, anyway, although we didn't get a lot of point production from some of them."

Just as important, those veteran forwards can help defensively.

"With an older crew of forwards helping in the defensive zone, that should create some opportunities for us," said Weinke. "In the past, we've had kind of a bend-but-don't-break mentality. This year, we can bend and hopefully be able to punch back a little bit."

Weinke said a strong freshman class will give the team additional depth.

"There are nine or 10 of them who have some background," he noted. "They've played for quite a while and are pretty hockey-savvy."

The Warriors will break in a new varsity goaltender. Ryan

Larrabee is gone, and sophomore Brian Dobes, who had a solid season at the junior varsity level last season, is the leading candidate to replace him. Senior Jared Weber will see some time in net, as will freshman Sam Hingtgen.

For the first time in years, the early season schedule has the Warriors at home more than on the road. Waterloo plays nine of its first 11 games at Young Arena.

"We've got to take advantage of being at home," said Weinke, whose team hosts Sioux City Saturday and Sunday. "We've got some tough games, but it's a chance to get some momentum started, especially with our younger guys."

"It won't be easy, but if we can get two out of three these first couple of weekends, that will be a great start for us. And if not, it's not the end of the season, either."

Meanwhile, the league has changed its name to the Midwest High School Hockey League. It's still made up of the Capitals, Des Moines Oakleafs, Sioux City, Omaha (Neb.), Ames, Mason City, Dubuque, Cedar Rapids, Quad Cities, Lincoln (Neb.) and Kansas City.

"The new name is just more representative of the league in general," said Weinke. "It started with Iowa teams, but it grew beyond Iowa. This gives it a more accurate identity."



**Shawn Weinke**  
Team opens season  
Friday night at home

Contact Doug Newhoff at (319) 291-1467 or [@wctcourier.com](mailto:doug.newhoff)