

WATERLOO WARRIORS: PREVIEW AND SCHEDULE



BOB CHASE /
Courier Staff
Photographer

Gracie Brian
Dobes (left)
and Jake Irey
have grown
up as hockey
summers
and
adversaries.

Dobes, Irey two of a kind

By DAVID NEWHOFF
Sports Editor

WATERLOO — These days, Lynda Road is part of a quiet Waterloo neighborhood near Hoover Middle School.

Not so long ago, it was a route best avoided most nights and weekends as rapidly moving projectiles roared through the air and across the pavement while scores of young men battled under the street lights.

Brian Dobes was part of the old Lynda Road gang. So was Jacob Irey. Sometimes they challenged each other. Sometimes, they teamed up against rival forces. Occasionally they went home bruised and bloodied.

And they loved every minute of the street hockey games that were as much a part of their youth as berries and homework.

"There was a little blood but nothing too major," said Dobes, who began playing street hockey with his older brothers at the age of five.

Irey smiles when he recalls those pick-up games, too.

"A lot of times, we'll be playing at like 11 at night with spotlights and stuff," he said. "They were very competitive. We hit a few cars ..."

"It helped just handling the puck and hand-eye coordination and testing out moves. It counted, but it didn't really count."

These days, there isn't much time for pick-up games. Dobes and Irey are playing competitive ice hockey nearly year-round.

Last summer, the high school juniors played in a league in Minneapolis. Currently, they're in their junior seasons for the Midwest High School Hockey League's Waterloo Warriors.

Dobes is the MHSHL's top returning goaltender after posting a 56.2 save percentage last season. Irey is the league's top returning scorer after tallying 29 goals and 23 assists in 23 games.

Their success is no coincidence. From the neighborhood games of their youth to junior hockey and the Warriors, they've poured themselves into the only sport they play.

"I've been playing a long time," said Dobes, whose father, David, played high school hockey in the Twin Cities. Both try brothers (Jason and Scott) played, and parents raise an assistant coach with the Waterloo Black Hawks.

"There was a lot of drive to try to get to that level."

Irey grew up watching his cousins play hockey in Minnesota. His parents were also fans of the game. He learned to skate at the age of 3 and soon developed a passion that continues to burn.

"If you want to go to the next level, you've got to always work at it year-round, whether it's playing games or working out," said Irey.

Warriors head coach Shawn Weirke sees what Irey and Dobes put into the game at every practice. It's a mentality that's catching on in the entire program.

"They both work hard every day at practice," said Weirke. "That's who they are, and that just leads into them doing the extra things away from the rink. Even during practice, they're the hardest workers, so their skills have followed the same path.

"They're competitive kids. They like to compete. If that's in practice, great. If it's a road game on the bus or whatever, they like to win."

Those are qualities that make good leaders, as well, and that's a role Dobes and Irey are willing to share for the Warriors.

"We lost a lot of the seniors from last year who were a lot of the leaders, so we had to have a lot of guys step up," said Dobes. "It's really hard to choose. We don't have the older guys like we did last year, so you have to have the younger guys step up."

"A lot of leadership is just showing them how."

It's also about setting a good example, added Irey.

"I think it starts with your actions and attitude," he said. "If you have the right attitude, guys will see that and you can motivate them in the right way."

Because of their skills and experience, Dobes and Irey are players their teammates know they can count on. In that regard, they help elevate the play of those around them.

"When we make mistakes, they're there to pick up some of the pieces," said Weirke. "Not always, but when they're out there, everybody's expectations go up a little bit. Because they're doing it, they can hold the other guys accountable. They're doing the things they're asking their teammates to do."

Both Dobes and Irey could have an opportunity to play a lot more hockey in the future. Dobes works out with the Black Hawks and is hoping to catch on with a junior A team in the near future and a college program after that. Irey is also

looking in those directions.

"I'm not ruling anything out," said Irey. "I'll just see what happens. I guess."

Meanwhile, Irey and Dobes continue to challenge each other in practice, just like the old days. Asked who he least likes to see on a breakaway in practice, Dobes said, "It has to be Jake."

As for Irey, he knows he has to come up with something special to get the best of Dobes.

"It helped me incredibly. He's got the coming up with new moves trying to beat him and figuring out new shots and stuff. We just kind of challenge each other."

Contact Doug Newhoff
at 319-231-1487 or
doug.newhoff@wccourier.com

Head Coach: Shawn Weirke
2006-07 record: 16-11-2-2
Assistant Coaches: Bill Jakes, Tom J. Van
Buren, Steve Weirke, D. Marquardt, Jeff A.
Brown, Tom J. Cook, Jason A. Brown, Brian G.
Kosman, Adamson, J.
Schedule
Nov. 2 - Waterloo @ Quad Cities 2:00
Nov. 3 - Quad City @ Waterloo 2
Nov. 6 - Waterloo @ Quad Cities 2:00
Nov. 10 - Des Moines Ice Hawks, 6:30 p.m.
Nov. 11 - Iowa City, 6:30 p.m.
Nov. 17 - Lincoln, 6:30 p.m.
Nov. 18 - Lincoln, 6:30 p.m.
Nov. 24 - Davenport, 6:30 p.m.
Nov. 25 - D Des Moines Capitals, 11:00 a.m.
Nov. 26 - Waterloo @ Davenport, 6:30 p.m.
Dec. 1 - Des Moines Ice Hawks, 6:30 p.m.
Dec. 2 - Waterloo @ Davenport, 10:00 a.m.
Dec. 7 - Davenport, 6:30 p.m.
Dec. 8 - Waterloo @ Davenport, 7:00 p.m.
Dec. 14 - D Des Moines Capitals, 7:30 p.m.
Dec. 15 - Waterloo @ Davenport, 6:30 p.m.
Dec. 16 - Ames, 6:30 p.m.
Dec. 18 - Waterloo, 7:30 p.m.
Dec. 20 - Waterloo @ Davenport, 10:00 a.m.
Dec. 21 - Ames, 6:30 p.m.
Dec. 22 - Waterloo @ Davenport, 6:30 p.m.
Dec. 23 - Waterloo @ Davenport, 6:30 p.m.
Dec. 24 - Waterloo @ Davenport, 6:30 p.m.
Dec. 25 - Waterloo @ Davenport, 6:30 p.m.
Dec. 26 - Waterloo @ Davenport, 6:30 p.m.
Dec. 27 - Waterloo @ Davenport, 6:30 p.m.
Dec. 28 - Waterloo @ Davenport, 6:30 p.m.
Dec. 29 - Waterloo @ Davenport, 6:30 p.m.
Dec. 30 - Waterloo @ Davenport, 6:30 p.m.
Dec. 31 - Waterloo @ Davenport, 6:30 p.m.