

STATE HOCKEY TOURNAMENT
MASON CITY VS. WATERLOO

GAME ON



TURSA PRINCE/The Globe Gazette

Mason City's Andrew Burgmeier controls the puck in front of an Ames defender in a game earlier this season. Mason City plays Waterloo today in the opening round of the state hockey tournament in Ames.

Mohawks face Waterloo in tournament opener

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AMES — The Mohawk Hockey Club ended the regular season on fire.

The Mohawks (20-9-1-2) enters today's 4 p.m. Midwest High School Hockey League tournament quarterfinal at the Ames/ISU Ice 'rena against the Waterloo Warriors winners of seven of their last eight games.

"We're playing good hockey right now," Mohawk Hockey Club coach Mark Hicks said. "We've been on a roll and it's nice to see our hand work starting to pay off. We can't get too high on the way we finished, but at the same time

we take it as a positive."

That strong push over the final eight games helped the Mohawks earn the fifth seed in the tournament.

The team's lone setback during that stretch came Saturday with a 3-2 loss to the Kansas City Slams.

In three previous meetings with Waterloo, the Mohawks came away victorious in two of the contests.

They outscored the Warriors 11-10, winning 4-3 on Dec. 11 and 3-3 on Feb. 12 while falling 4-2 on Jan.

13.

"We know it's going to take our best effort," Hicks said. "They're a good team and we were fortunate enough to beat them two times."

Leading the Mohawks offensively are three juniors — Will Martin, Andrew Burgmeier and Justin Mettl.

Martin has leads the team in points (45) and assists (25). Burgmeier leads the team in goals with 22 and is second in points with 40 while Mettl is second on the team in assists (21) and third in points (35).

However, Hicks said it's been the play of his seniors, most notably Levi Lancaster and Jared

Rosendahl, that has impacted the team down the stretch.

"Our junior class has really stepped up, but a lot of that has to do with our seniors, especially Levi and Jared," Hicks said. "The other guys may get the credit, but without their leadership, I don't know where we would be."

In net, juniors Drake Lundeen and Max Lassie have shared the bulk of the duties. Lundeen is 11-8-1 with three shutouts, a 2.33 goals against average and .901 save percentage. Lassie is 8-1-0 with four shutouts, a 1.39 goals against average and .939 save percentage.

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Meanwhile, the Warriors (22-8-0-2) are led by Jake Irey, who has recorded 44 goals and 37 assists for 81 points.

Dawson Kuhlmann is next in line with 58 points (27 goals, 31 assists) while Spencer Warren has recorded 15 goals and 30 assists for 45 points.

While Irey, Kuhlmann and Spencer's numbers are gaudy, Hicks said the rest of the Waterloo offense is far from mediocre.

"We're not just going to have to shut them down, but shut everyone down," Hicks said. "We have to respect everybody on their team. I wouldn't call the rest of their players mediocre by any means."

In net, Brian Dobes has seen much of the action this season, recording 20 victories while posting a 1.93 goals against average and a save percentage of .916.

"Brian is a good goaltender," Hicks said. "He'll be a challenge for us."

The winner of today's quarterfinal game advances to face either the top-seeded Lincoln Jr. Stars or eighth-seeded Des Moines Oak Leafs at 1:30 p.m. Saturday in a semifinal.

The loser moves to the consolation bracket where it will meet the loser of the Jr. Stars/Oak Leafs game Saturday at 9:30 a.m.

Hicks said his focus has been solely on Waterloo.

"Honestly, I haven't thought about anything but winning the first period against Waterloo," the coach said. "Once the first period is over, then we'll move on to the second period, then the third period. When the Waterloo game is over, that's when we'll start putting notes together for our next game."