

New-look prep team on C.R. ice

By Jeff Johnson
The Gazette

CEDAR RAPIDS — He was cool with being interviewed and videotaped, but Matt Larson had a request first.

HOCKEY

"Hey, can I go change into our new uniform?" the Cedar Rapids RoughRiders captain asked.

No, not those RoughRiders. These are the high school RoughRiders the Midwest High School Hockey

League season with a home game last night against Dubuque, then



Chad Horner
Prep coach

travel to the Quad Cities today and Sunday to Quad Cities.

You might remember them as the Cedar Rapids Mustangs. The new owners of

the United States Hockey League RoughRiders are taking much more of a hands-on approach with the youth hockey pro-



Liz Martin/The Gazette

The RoughRiders high school hockey team, including Quin Kavanaugh (face visible), huddle in the locker room after the first period of its game against the Dubuque Devils last night at the Cedar Rapids Ice Arena. The Riders won, 4-2.

grams at the Cedar Rapids Ice Arena. All team nicknames have been changed to RoughRiders.

New jerseys were purchased for the high school team, and players are ex-

cited about them.

"I think the biggest change is the boys finally are able to come home to a rink that they know is theirs," said first-year head coach Chad Horner.

"You look at this place now, The Stable, all the green painting. And now with the name, I think there's a real sense of

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Lee Goodlove (right) passes the puck to a RoughRiders teammate as the Dubuque Devils' J.T. Bortscheller gets tripped up last night in a high school hockey game at the Cedar Rapids Ice Arena. The RoughRiders won, 4-2.

RoughRiders/New uniforms, attitude

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pride that they're not only representing their community, themselves and their team, but now we've got the RoughRider name on our chests. We've got to represent that, too."

A Colorado native, Horner has 30 players to work with, including one female (Cedar Rapids Kennedy senior Kelsa Jackson). All Metro and Iowa City high schools except Marion are represented, as are Alburnett, Solon and West Branch.

"We've improved a lot from last year," said Larson, of West Branch. "We're going to have a couple of surprises this season."

"In the past, I know



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The high school RoughRiders' Tanner Hildebrand (center) tumbles to the ice during a battle for the puck last night against Dubuque Devils Robert Nelson (left) and Alex Fairbanks at the Cedar Rapids Ice Arena.

they've kind of had a division between the older guys and the younger guys," said Jacob Sev-

ening, a sophomore from Alburnett. "But this year, everyone is kind of together. The seniors are

all good guys, and they're leading the team."

They hope for more victories. The high school program has struggled, with multiple coaches and multiple losses. The team went 2-29-0-2 in the 2006-07 season, 2-33-0-1 in 2007-08 and 4-25-3-0 in 2008-09.

"It sucks, obviously, to lose that much," Larson said. "People in the locker room are always down. You come to the rink basically thinking we're going to get our butts handed to us. It's going to be kind of nice this year coming in with a new attitude, a new start, a new everything. Let's pick up some wins this year."

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