

Metros open season Friday vs. Lincoln

BY MICHAEL BRAUER

mbrauer@siouxcityjournal.com

SIOUX CITY - Metros hockey coach Brant Mozak has to replace an all-league forward, choose a goalie and figure out his lineups.

Now, if only he had all his players.

The Sioux City Metros officially drop the puck to their 2010-11 Midwest High School Hockey League season on Friday against Lincoln, and Mozak has yet to have all 34 guys show up for practice.

"We actually haven't had a full practice yet with everybody there," Mozak said. "But we're getting close to full strength."

The Metros are a conglomerate, made up of players from 14 area high schools. Some, like multi-sport athletes from Dakota Valley and Sioux City East, were still finishing football this week.

Mozak is leaning on two, especially, to make a quick transition - East defenseman

Mitchell Vos and DV forward Taylor White.

Vos had 18 assists in 31 games last season and Mozak thinks Taylor White, who scored four goals, is the team's most natural leader.

From the sound of things, he'll have plenty of players to lead.

"Our numbers are really good compared to last year," Mozak said. "Which, that also means that we're young."

The Metros are replacing more than three-quarters of last season's scoring production. All-league forward Colton Kramer, who scored 42 goals as a sophomore, opted to play for Omaha's AAA U16 squad this year. Senior Eric Flynn and Adam Bornholtz also graduated.

The Metros' leading returning scorer is Desmond Harsma, who netted nine goals last season. He's also just getting back his hockey legs after playing football for West.

While his scorers continue

to break in their skates, Mozak intends to lean on his defense.

"If you don't give up many goals, you're going to win a lot of games," he said. "Our defensive zone is the main thing we've been working on."

The Metros have a trio of senior goaltenders to help things along.

Garrett Van Buskirk (North) and Alex Wankum (Gehlen) each spent time between the posts last season, and Austin Ward (North) returns to the team after not playing his junior year.

Mozak plans on using a goalie-by-committee approach this year, unless someone really starts to stand out.

"Right now we don't have that one guy, and we may not have that one guy all year," the second-year coach said. "We're going to go with whoever's hot at the right time."

The puck drops at 8 p.m. at the IBP Ice Center.