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For Immediate Release



High School Hockey Celebrates 40th Season

Ten of 12 Midwest High School Hockey League teams square off Saturday and Sunday, October 31 and November 1, to open the 2015-2016 season: Des Moines Oak Leafs visits Sioux City, Lincoln plays at Ames, Des Moines Capitals hosts Waterloo, Quad City entertains Omaha, and Dubuque travels to Kansas City. Cedar Rapids and Mason City begin play the following weekend.

Opening day will mark the 40th season of high school hockey. The League was formed in the fall of 1976, originally named the Iowa High School Hockey League. Eleven teams were divided into two divisions. Division One included Varsity teams from West Des Moines Dowling, Des Moines Hoover-Roosevelt, West Des Moines Valley, Urbandale, Waterloo Warriors, Waterloo Columbus and Sioux City. Fledgling teams in Ames, Ankeny, Mason City and Des Moines Lincoln made up Division two. As teams matured, the divisions merged in 1979-1980.

Waterloo Columbus swept team titles in the inaugural season, capturing the regular-season championship with a 10-win, 2-loss record and defeated West Des Moines Dowling 5-2 in the championship game of the first Varsity State Tournament held at Hilton Coliseum in Ames.

In later years, teams from Nebraska, Kansas, Missouri and South Dakota joined the League. In 2006-2007 the name was changed to the Midwest High School Hockey League to better reflect its regional membership.

The current 12-team MHSHL is divided into three Divisions. Kansas City, Lincoln, Omaha and Sioux City are in the West; Ames, Des Moines Capitals, Des Moines Oak Leafs and Mason City make up the Central; and Cedar Rapids, Dubuque, Quad City and Waterloo round out the East. Each team plays Division rivals four times and teams outside the Division twice, for a 28-game schedule. Each team competes at the Varsity and Jr. Varsity levels. The top-eight teams qualify for year-end tournaments. Each division champion is seeded 1st through 3rd based on points earned during the regular season. The next five teams, regardless of division alignment, are seeded 4th through 8th based on points earned during the regular season.

The Kansas City Jets is the defending Varsity champion for both team titles. The Jets clinched last year's regular-season title on the last day with a 25W-3L-0T record. Kansas City went on to defeat Dubuque 4-1 in the finals of the Varsity Championship Tournament in Ames.

The Des Moines Oak Leafs was last year's Junior Varsity regular-season champion with a 22W-4L-2T record, while the Des Moines Capitals captured the Year-End Tournament title shutting out Kansas City, 3-0, in the championship game.

In last year's post-season Varsity play, Dubuque, Kansas City, Omaha and Waterloo competed in the 2015 USA Hockey High School National Championships in Chesterfield, Missouri. All four teams advanced through the round-robin games to the Championship bracket. Omaha and Waterloo lost in the quarter-finals, Kansas City was eliminated in the semi-finals, and Dubuque lost 2-1 in the Championship game to Cherry Creek, Colorado.

After 40 seasons of competitive high school hockey, the League continues to grow. This season over 400 Varsity and Junior Varsity players on 12 teams will take the ice guided by dozens of experienced coaches, plus scores of referees and volunteers. Teams will play a 28-game schedule culminating with the Varsity Championship Tournament in Ames, February 26-28, 2016, and the Junior Varsity Year-End Tournament in Ames, March 4-6, 2016.

After 40 seasons of exciting high school hockey, the MHSHL continues its mission: *"Competitive high school hockey scoring big on family and academic values!"*