

# A special senior night for high school hockey team

RoughRiders now gear up for league tournament

By Isaac Gomez, C.R. Washington Junior

CEDAR RAPIDS — Senior Night at the Cedar Rapids Ice Arena was a night of recognition and celebration for a group of players who have dedicated their lives to the sport of hockey and to their fellow teammates.

As people entered “The Stable,” they were greeted with signs left and right congratulating the seniors of 2019. Along the concourse were posters of each senior on the High School RoughRiders. Each poster was filled with pictures of the players growing up with the sport.

Their tables were littered with medals and trophies they had won throughout their lives, ultimately leading up to their final season before moving on to college.

Cedar Rapids Washington’s Max Taylor was one of the seniors recognized on Feb. 22 before a game against the Dubuque Devils. Taylor has been playing hockey since he was 6 and was introduced to the game at an even younger age.

“My grandpa got season tickets the year after I was born to the RoughRiders here and I’ve been going ever since,” he said.

Before the game, the seniors were acknowledged for their longevity and contribution to the team. The announcer called out each senior, who skated to the middle of the ice where they met their parents or relative.

Each player had different heard facts about themselves — like nickname, favorite high school hockey moment and funniest moment.



Jim Stosiarek/The Gazette

Cedar Rapids RoughRiders’ Max Taylor (center) takes the puck as he gets help from teammate Ethan Kochanny (left) in blocking Waterloo Warriors’ Luke Metcalf during a Midwest High School Hockey League game Dec. 12 at the Cedar Rapids Ice Arena.

The night gave the crowd a chance to get to know these players a little better, outside of being just another hockey player.

When it came to game time, the RoughRiders drew first blood against the Devils with a goal from senior Carter Renwick in the fifth minute of the first period. The ‘Riders put on an offensive clinic, scoring seven goals. Junior Hunter Williams and senior Ryan Carlson both had two goals in the 7-1 victory.

In both the game and pregame, it was all about the RoughRiders. Taylor and the rest of the team know senior night was a special game and a night to remember the long ride.

“Last year here, ever,” Taylor said. “Some of them, I’ve been playing with them since Mite.”

The varsity team finished the regular season at 27-5 with 54 points, third in the Midwest High School Hockey League standings behind Waterloo and

Sioux City. The RoughRiders begin play in the league tournament Friday in Ames, taking on the No. 6 Des Moines Capitals. Winners advance to the semifinals Saturday with the championship game at 11 a.m. Sunday.

Many of these 11 seniors been playing hockey with each other since they were 8 and, after this weekend’s tournament, all will be taking a different path. But each player will look back and remember this group of teammates and friends.