

High School Hockey Opens Season with 14 Teams

This weekend the Midwest High School Hockey League will start the season one team stronger with the addition of the Boji Mammoths, who play out of the Boji Bay Ice Arena in Spirit Lake, Iowa. The League now totals 14 teams, after the Fremont Flyers (Nebraska), joined the League last season. This marks the League's largest membership since the 2010-2011 season.

Boji will play in the West Division with Fremont, Lincoln, Omaha and Sioux City. The Kansas City Jets move to the Central Division with Ames, Des Moines Capitals, Des Moines Oak Leafs, and Mason City. The East Division remains unchanged, and includes Cedar Rapids, Dubuque, Quad City and Waterloo. Teams will play a 32-game schedule.

In the lone Friday opening-night contest, Ames hosts the Des Moines Oak Leafs. All teams then take the ice for a pair of Saturday and Sunday games: Dubuque at Mason City, Waterloo at Lincoln, Ames at Kansas City, Sioux City at Cedar Rapids, Des Moines Oak Leafs at Boji, Omaha at Quad City, and Des Moines Capitals travel to Fremont.

The Waterloo Warriors are the defending regular-season and tournament champions. The Warriors finished the regular season with an impressive Varsity record of 29 wins, 2 losses and 1 shutout loss. Waterloo edged Cedar Rapids in the Varsity Tournament Championship Game by a 2-1 score.

Omaha captured its third consecutive Junior Varsity regular-season championship, and earned the top spot at the Junior Varsity Year-End Tournament, besting Waterloo 5-0 in the title game.

The 2019-2020 regular season ends Sunday, March 1, followed by the 2020 MHSHL Championship Weekend at the Ames/ISU Ice Arena the first full weekend in March where the top eight Varsity and JV teams will battle for the tournament title. The Varsity tournament will run from Friday, March 6 to Sunday, March 8, while the Junior Varsity tournament will begin Thursday, March 5, and run through Saturday, March 7. The first day of quarterfinal games for both divisions are single-elimination.

The Des Moines Oak Leafs will play six home games at Des Moines' Wells Fargo Arena, home of the Iowa Wild professional hockey team. The Wild has designated the December 21st game between the Oak Leafs and rival Des Moines Capitals as the "Iowa Hockey Classic" to celebrate the history of hockey in the state. The contest will precede the American Hockey League game between the Iowa Wild and Grand Rapids Griffins.

After 37 years in the North Iowa Ice Arena on the grounds of the North Iowa Fair, the Mason City Mohawks will have a new home in early December. The City of Mason City is currently renovating a vacant mall into a multi-purpose arena as part of its downtown River City Renaissance project. The Mohawks are tentatively scheduled to host the Des Moines Capitals in the new facility Friday, December 6th.

Two long-time scoring and goaltending records fell last season. Waterloo forward Ben Sinnott set a new mark for goals in a single season with 54, breaking the old mark of 52, held by Des Moines Oak Leafs' Joseph Harcharick during the 2005-06 season. Waterloo goaltender Chase Pabst logged 14 shutouts surpassing the old record of 10, set by Mason City's Austin Maginnis during the 2005-06 season.

Over 425 high school student athletes compete in the League that covers three states. This year marks the 44th year of the Midwest High School Hockey League, formerly known as the Iowa High School Hockey League.

The MSHSL is a member of the Pointstreak Scoring Network. For scores, standings and statistics go to: <http://www.midwesthighschoolhockey.com>

For a complete history of the Iowa/Midwest High School Hockey League including year-by-year listings of past champions and statistics, go to the Information Vault at <http://www.mhshl.com/>