



CHRIS ZOELLER PHOTOS

Mason City Mohawk hockey club coach John Lloyd gives pointers to senior AJ Corsello prior to practice on Feb. 6 at the Mason City All Purpose Arena in downtown Mason City.

Lloyd's impact felt throughout North Iowa

Since 1983, Mohawk hockey club coach has been on the ice

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When John Lloyd arrived in North Iowa in 1983, he brought with him an immense passion for hockey.

Growing up, Lloyd was constantly playing. Much of the time, he played on outdoor rinks on foot, or unorganized hockey teams, moving up to a men's league when he lived in Alaska.

In 1967, when Lloyd was working as an air traffic controller in Fairbanks, he walked down half a block from his home to an outdoor rink to watch a game.

While having a conversation with a man who was a coaching director, Lloyd was asked to coach a bantam team, consisting of seventh- and eighth-graders, as there was a shortage of coaches at the time.

Apprehensive at first, the idea clearly grew on him once he accepted the job and led his team to a first-place finish, a modest origin to a 53-year coaching career.

After transferring to the Minne-



Mason City Mohawk hockey club coach John Lloyd begins practice on Feb. 6 at the Mason City All Purpose Arena in downtown Mason City.

apolis Air Traffic Control in Farmington, Lloyd continued to coach youth hockey and was an assistant coach for a high school team.

In 1983, the inaugural year of the North Iowa Ice Arena in Mason City, Lloyd accepted a job as arena manager and promptly began coaching the high school club (Mohawk hockey), which this year pulls talent from six North Iowa high schools.

Since then, Lloyd has made North Iowa a haven for youth hockey.

"He's been a big part of hockey throughout North Iowa," said assistant coach and former player Ethan McHenry. "He's made an

impact and pretty much everyone knows who he is when you say his name."

McHenry, who had played for Lloyd for over 10 years, including four years on the Mohawk club, couldn't seem to stay away after graduating in 2016. He has helped the team with player development for the past two seasons.

"He's got that knowledge and experience of all the years he's coached and he knows what works, what doesn't work," he said. "If he's going to tell you to do something, he's got facts to back himself up."

As an ambassador for a sport for such a long time, things are

bound to change over time. The one thing that hasn't changed for Lloyd is enjoying watching his players grow.

"I like to go watch our little mites," he said. "You get to know them as they come up, and sometimes you'll see a couple of kids that are just really good. But as they get older, they're still good, but the rest of them catch up, so it makes for good competition by the time they get to high school."

Sitting in his new office at the Mason City Multi-Purpose Arena, Lloyd had trouble picking a favorite memory or team from throughout his career, indicating a career full of good memories to choose from.

"I can remember things about all the teams. Sometimes it's certain players," he said. "There's quite a few games that I remember that I think about often because they're just fun games. Sometimes we lost, sometimes we won, but they were just good competition."

At the end of the day, it's what his players take with them after they leave the ice that is most important to Lloyd.

"I've watched the work ethic in some of our players. And then, after they get out in the real world, that work ethic is still there," he said. "That's gratifying to see."