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The Waterloo Warriors take possession of the Midwest High School Hockey League tournament trophy after defeating Cedar Rapids 2-1 in the championship game last season.

Hungry for more

Warriors looking for back-to-back titles

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WATERLOO — No team in the history of the Midwest High School Hockey League has more tournament championships than the Waterloo Warriors' eight titles.

One thing the Warriors haven't done is go back-to-back.

With a powerful nucleus returning from a 32-2-0-1 season when Waterloo won both the regular-season and postseason championships, that will be the goal be-

ginning Saturday when the Warriors open the 2019-20 at Lincoln.

"They're pretty hungry to do something that hasn't been done before and that's go back-to-back," said head coach Brian Cook.

Cook lost six valuable senior contributors from last year's team, but 13 players who saw varsity action return.

That group includes the MHSHL's top two scorers last season in Ben Sinnott (54 goals, 38 assists, 92 points) and Kole Latu-sick (30 goals, 54 assists, 84 points), although Sinnott's football season with Waterloo Columbus has extended into the playoffs.

Blue-line enforcers Brady Buckley and Mason Lamb (15 points each) also return, as do Luke Metcalf and John Harrison along with seven players who saw time at both the varsity and junior varsity levels.

"The biggest thing we have over the teams I've coached before is our depth," said Cook. "We have three or four very strong lines. I've never been able to say that before. Just the experience we have in those three to four lines is incredible."

About the only area that is unsettled is the goaltending where Eli Marchese (25-8, 1.91 goals-

against average, .901 save percentage for the JV last season), Caleb Rajsty and Jakobi Davis are in the mix.

"We have three goaltenders who are tremendous talents," said Cook. "They are all sophomores. The last two teams we've won with had a junior goaltender and a senior goaltender. It's enough to make a difference, but the way we look at it we may have some bumps at the beginning of the year but by the end of the year they will basically be juniors and we should be OK."

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"The first part of the season we might rotate guys in as much as we can to see who's playing well and who can handle varsity hockey."

Cook and the Warriors know it's not easy to repeat a tournament championship.

"You do have some kids who are like, 'Oh, we're gonna win it again,' and they kind of take it for granted," Cook explained. "Another reason it's hard is that usually you have to have an older team, a senior-laden team, to win championships. Then the teams

that do win it graduate a lot of seniors and have to reboot again.

"The other part is that both years when I played and we won it, we stayed away from big injuries. The two years we didn't compete for the championship, we were devastated by injuries. We didn't have one major injury last year."

The MHSHL has added a 14th team this season — the Boji Mammoths out of Spirit Lake.

"It should be a fun season," said Cook. "We have a lot of positive scoring back from last year and we have a deep team, so we're looking for some good things again this year."