

Minnesota Girls Hockey Hub

Irondale's glue label shifts from Meghan to Megan

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By Star Tribune



Megan Gjere

Hours before her Irondale hockey team played rival Coon Rapids for a tournament championship on Saturday, senior Megan Gjere braved the cold and drizzle to cheer for her older brother, Jimmy, and the Gophers football team.

The day offered a double shot of success. The Gophers topped Illinois and Irondale beat the Cardinals, running its record to 5-0.

"To see them finish the season on a high note was great," Gjere said of the Gophers.

She has similar hopes this season for her Knights, a team loaded with young and improving forwards. As those players learn to score, Gjere is anchoring the defense and the team.

"She's the glue holding the young girls together," Knights coach Tom Rodefeld said. "The past several years, I've told our girls to do what Meghan [Lorence] is doing. I still am. It's just a different Megan this year."

Gjere spoke with Star Tribune reporter David La Vaque about starting fast and a far-sighted approach to the season.

Q How do you look at starting the season 5-0? Is it what you expected?

A I knew we had lost a lot of forwards so I had no clue how the season was going to start. I just wanted to see what the character of our team was going to be. Our team is just so young that I didn't know how we'd react to different situations. In the Coon Rapids game, we went into the third period tied 0-0 but the forwards were hungry, worked hard and made a lot of adjustments.

Q Did beating Coon Rapids show you a little something extra in terms of the team's character?

A Yeah, definitely. They were probably the first team that was more of a rival for us. They beat us twice last year, in our tournament and to end our season. We felt like we needed to bring it that game because we knew what was coming at us.

Q Coach Rodefeld said you're the glue that holds the young girls together. What example are you trying to set?

A I'm just trying to stay positive and teach as much as I can because there's so much to learn. We have so many good, young players who are doing well. And I like their attitudes.

Q Irondale went to state twice in the past three seasons, so is the program's expectation to get back?

A Definitely. It starts with working hard. A few years ago, Coach Rodefeld started saying we want to get 1 percent better every practice. That's a big deal because you want to be a different team at the end of the season than you are at the beginning.

Q You've got some talent with Samantha Donovan. She's been scoring a lot but what does she bring to the table overall?

A She's one that works very hard on and off the ice. She's quick and she has a heart for the game. When a teammate gets the puck, she'll get open for them. When she has the puck, she'll look for them.

Q Coach Rodefeld talked a lot about emphasizing defense. Being a defenseman, how are you trying to play your role even better?

A We have two senior D and two junior D and then an eighth-grader. So the majority of the experience is at defense. So Coach Rodefeld has talked about relying on us while the forwards develop.