

## Bluffs natives hope to lead Blackhawks



Staff photo/Cindy Christensen - Council Bluffs natives (from left) Jeff McQuinn, Brad Triplett, Chris Moore, Derek Townsend and Albert Rodriguez hope to bring another American Professional Football League title to the city. The Iowa Blackhawks open their season next Saturday at the Mid-America Center against the Missouri Mustangs.

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From the very beginning, owner Jake Hiffernan and head coach Mike Wolff have built the Iowa Blackhawks to be Council Bluffs' team. A big part of their philosophy was to have local players on the organization's roster at all times.

This year is no different. Whether it be an experienced veteran like Chris Moore or an indoor rookie like Derek Townsend, C.B. natives will again be in the mix for the Blackhawks this season.

"One of the things we've always tried to strive for is to make sure that we get some local representation from the high schools," Wolff said. "We've got a pretty good mix here of Lewis Central and Thomas Jefferson kids. We always want to try to attract and recruit kids from Council Bluffs."

Five players from the city participated in Iowa's preseason scrimmage with the River City Raiders at the Mid-America Center on Wednesday.

L.C. graduates Jeff McQuinn and Brad Triplett and former T.J. standouts Albert Rodriguez and Moore were all on the roster of last year's American Professional Football League championship team. Abraham Lincoln grad Cory Petersen, who did not play Wednesday, and Townsend have been added for this season.

"When I saw that they won it last year, I was excited just to see if I could try to join them," said Townsend, who finished his collegiate career at Southwest Minnesota State in the fall. "I knew they had some good guys, if not all of them, at least coming back. I just wanted to come out and see what it was like and if I could do well at it."

The 2005 T.J. graduate is expected to make an immediate impact as a wide receiver and backup quarterback, Wolff said. He's currently earning internship credit while working for C.B. Parks and Recreation and will graduate from college in May.

According to Wolff, Moore deserves some of the credit for bringing Townsend aboard. The A.L. assistant, who is in his sixth year with the Blackhawks, actually coached his new indoor teammate during the 2004 high school season.

At 29, Moore is one of the older players on the Iowa roster, although you'd never know it by his physique or the tenacity with which he plays. The veteran linebacker said the thrill of playing on Saturday nights continues to bring him back year after year.

"I've been playing football since I was 10 years old. It's hard to walk away," Moore said. "I'm feeling pretty old now, but I think I still have a little bit left in the tank. I guess I'm just trying to stay young."

"I still love being around the guys, too. We have a great group of guys, and I love hanging out with them a couple of nights a week."

It's that camaraderie that has kept McQuinn in the game as well. The standout defensive lineman said there's "nothing better than playing with a good group of guys who want to win."

And after winning the APFL title for the first time last year, McQuinn's hunger for success has only grown. He said he and the team's other C.B. natives are proud to have won a professional football championship for their home town.

"There's definitely a sense of pride," he said. "There's so much pride in it because of all the people who care. We can build up on that."