

Blackhawks host Missouri

The Iowa Blackhawks resume play tonight (7:05 p.m.) when they host the Missouri Minutemen in American Professional Football League action at the Mid-America Center.

By JOSH MURPHY, Staff Writer

Published: Saturday, May 21, 2005 2:00 AM CDT

The Iowa Blackhawks resume play tonight (7:05 p.m.) when they host the Missouri Minutemen in American Professional Football League action at the Mid-America Center.

The Blackhawks (1-1) play their first game since May 6, when they fell in the final seconds of the contest to the defending league champion Kansas Koyotes, 34-28, at the MAC. They plan to carry the momentum from the near-upset over to Saturday's match.

"Our guys played so well. They actually deserved that win," said Blackhawks general manager Jake Hiffernan. "The guys know where they stand. They know that they can win, and they had a wake-up call."

Iowa faces a Missouri team that features former Baltimore Ravens running back Jason Brookins. Brookins ran for 551 yards and five touchdowns for the Ravens in 2001 and looks to get his career back on track with the Minutemen.

A lot of new players appear on Missouri's roster this season, faces that the Blackhawks are not familiar with.

"They went out and recruited hard," Hiffernan said. "They have some talent. I'm not sure what to expect."

"We do know they like to run the ball. They score a lot of touchdowns running, and they have a tough defense."

The Blackhawks will counter that defense with the return of wide-receiver Ryan Kauffman, who sat out the previous game with a rib injury.

"I'm really looking forward to seeing how Kauffman responds to coming back from the injury," Hiffernan said. "He practiced, he didn't feel any lingering pain, and he's pretty close to 100 percent."

Kauffman joins an already-potent Blackhawk offense that also features former Thomas Jefferson standout Justin Kammrad at running back, quarterback Chuck Wright, wide receiver and running back George Patterson III, and wide receiver Yano Jones.

"Kauffman has speed. He stretches the defense. He's a big deep-ball threat," said Hiffernan. "It's a definite positive that he's in the lineup."

Hiffernan is confident that the Blackhawks can bounce back from the Kansas game and beat the Minutemen.

"I expect nothing less than them coming out and saying (after the game), 'Wow, you guys really played an awesome game,'" Hiffernan said. "We have so many athletes and they play so well together as a team."