

Blackhawks look for playoff spot

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The Iowa Blackhawks look to clinch a playoff spot Saturday when they take on the Kansas Storm in American Professional Football League action at the Mid-America Center.

The Blackhawks (3-3) are hoping to bounce back from two straight losses, including a 46-12 defeat at the hands of the Kansas Koyotes on June 11. General manager Jake Hiffernan expects his team to be motivated and prepared for Saturday's game.

"They have been lacking intensity. They need to get into the game a little bit more," said Hiffernan. "They come into the game mentally prepared but they just need to get into the game like we expect them to do."

The Blackhawks will have plenty of motivation with a playoff berth on the line. They also need to win both Saturday's game and the following contest to host the semi-final playoff.

"It makes this game pretty urgent," Hiffernan said.

Coach Mike Wolff said that he isn't going to change his game-plan despite the recent funk.

"We're not going to change anything offensively that we've done," Wolff said. "We're going to use the pass to open up the run and the run to open up the pass."

"One of the things we're hoping for is that we get some players healed up," he added.

One player the Blackhawks will not have on Saturday is wide receiver Kurt Ferguson, who will miss his second straight game after spraining his ankle on June 6 against the Wichita Aviators.

"He's a tremendous weapon to have," Wolff said.

Wide receiver Yano Jones will return from an injury on Saturday in Ferguson's absence.

"He basically gives us a go-to guy on third down," said Wolff. "When we're going for first down, he's a big physical target to pass to."

Iowa will take on a first-year Storm team that lacks experience. In their past two games, the Storm fell to Wichita by a score of 91-6 and was shutout by the Nebraska Bears, 58-0.

"It's hard to say what to expect outside of that they're just a little inexperienced," Hiffernan said about the Storm.

Hiffernan expressed confidence that the Blackhawks will be able to break out of their funk on Saturday.

"We have struggled to finish teams off. We play good for 3-1/2 quarters. It concerns me a little," Hiffernan said. "They're down on themselves, but if they go out and win this game it'll be good for their morale."

"I'm confident that they'll bounce back and be okay."

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