

Sports

Blackhawks on two-game skid

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Iowa is entering Saturday's home finale with Springfield in an unusual situation.

The two-time American Professional Football League champion Blackhawks (4-4) are on a rare two-game losing streak, and they find themselves sitting at the .500 mark with only three games left in the regular season.

Even Iowa coach Mike Wolff can't recall the last time his team was in such a spot.

"It's been a while," he said. "One of the things we've talked about as a coaching staff is the position that we've played ourselves in right now is that every game from here on out is a must win. If we do that, we still control our own destiny."

APFL newcomer Sioux City (9-0) has locked up the top seed for the upcoming playoffs. Iowa and Mid-Missouri (4-4) are currently tied for second in the league standings, and they'll meet next week in Sedalia, Mo., in what may be a winner-take-all game for the second seed.

That makes Saturday's 7 p.m. game with Springfield (2-6) a crucial one for the Blackhawks.

"If we win this one, then we're still even with Mid-Missouri," Wolff said. "And then we'd play them down there and, again, it's a must win for us to put them with two losses (to us) against our one loss to them. If we end up the season tied, then we'd own the tiebreaker."

The Outlaws came from 18 points down in the fourth quarter to top Iowa 44-40 in Sedalia two weeks ago. The Blackhawks then lost a tight 49-42 contest at home to Sioux City last Friday.

Wolff said his team played well on both occasions, and that Iowa will rebound this week.

"I think we're going to get a great effort," he said. "The guys were upbeat after the Sioux City game. They know they played a great game. They know that one or two breaks here or there, and that game's probably going to us rather than Sioux City."

The Blackhawks, who have lost three times to the Bandits, also have a road game with six-time league champion Kansas before the month ends. The APFL playoffs start on the first weekend in July.

"Every week, we have to get better and take care of our own business," Wolff said. "And then (we need to) peak at the right time. I guess that's what we're shooting for ... to win out, get that No. 2 seed and try to get some momentum going into the playoffs."