

## 2005 SEASON PREVIEW



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With a Big Ten Championship trophy to on the shelf and a new home to move into, the Iowa Field Hockey team is anxiously awaiting the start of the 2005 season.

Last year, the Hawkeyes went 13-8 (5-1 in the Big Ten), earned the school its 13th conference championship and returned to the NCAA Tournament for the first time since 1999.

The team also played its final game on the original Grant Field, and will move into the new state-of-the-art field hockey complex this season.

"There is a lot of excitement surrounding our program this year," Head Coach Tracey Griesbaum said. "Returning with a Big Ten Championship is always special, but when you factor in that we are moving into what will be one of the best facilities in the nation this fall, it makes for a whole lot of enthusiasm."

The team that steps on the new Grant Field will have a new look to it as well after losing five starting seniors to graduation. Gone are first team all-American's Barb Weinberg and Sarah Dawson, along with four-time all-Big Ten pick Lauren Stiver, Margot McMahon and Tammy Leister.

"Losing five seniors that contributed so much to the team last season will be tough," Griesbaum said. "We will look to a combination of returnees and freshmen to fill the void left behind."

The following is a position-by-position breakdown of the 2005 squad.

## FORWARDS

The forward line will be without its biggest gun from a year ago, with first team all-American Sarah Dawson taking her talents to the United States National Team.

The coaching staff will look to junior Kara Zappone and sophomore Caroline Blaum to step up and help fill the void left by Dawson's graduation.

Zappone played in 15 games last season and scored just one goal, but Coach Griesbaum says she is the leader of the team's offensive scheme and has the field awareness to be a top-notch attacker for the Hawkeyes.

Blaum is coming off a great freshman campaign where she scored 14 points off six goals and two assists, including back-to-back overtime game-winners in the Big Ten Tournament.

"Caroline really came on at the end of last season and delivered in some clutch situations for us," Griesbaum said. "She has great playmaking skills that should really help us this season."

The staff will also look to Adrienne Dybus and freshmen Lindsey Duffy, Katie Naughton and high school all-American Caitlin McCurdy to help shore up the attack.

The forward line should have speed to burn, which the coaches are hoping to use to wear down their opponents.

## MIDFIELD

The midfield will be patrolled by second team all-Big Ten selection Debbie Birrell, who returns for her senior season. Last year, Birrell recorded 20 points on seven goals and six assists.

"Debbie will be looked at to hold down everything on both the offensive and defensive sides of the field," Griesbaum said. "She is a good leader, and it will be nice having her experience in the middle of the field this season."

Incoming freshman Lauren Pfeiffer be looked upon to contribute right away in the midfield. She had a very decorated prep career at Lenape H.S., where she was a high school all-American and three-time all-state selection. Pfeiffer was also named to the U.S. Under-21 team this summer.

Juniors Kelly Slattery and Heather Schnepf could also see time in the midfield, as could freshman Caitlin McCurdy.

## DEFENSE

The Hawkeye backfield should once again be the strength of the team, with four experienced players returning. The group is led by all-Big Ten back Heather Schnepf, who returns after making a career-high five defensive saves last season.

Speedster Kelly Slattery and veteran Shelby Roche should line up with Schnepf to give the Hawkeyes a lot of experience on defense. Sophomore Kadi Sickel started all 21 games as a freshman and score three game-winning goals, two in overtime against Michigan and Penn State.

"Our defense should be the most experience part of the team, and that is comforting knowing that we will have a freshman goalkeeper this season," Griesbaum said. "We need them to be highly organized and make the shots that do get through predictable for our goalkeeper."

Freshman Roz Ellis will also be vying for playing time this season.

## GOALKEEPING

The biggest shoes to fill this season will be those of departed goalkeeper Barb Weinberg, who was a two-time all-American and three-time first team all-Big Ten pick.

Newcomers Megan Heise, Melissa Helsel and Lissa Munley will fight it out for the starting nod this season.

"All three incoming goalkeepers are very talented and have different strengths," Griesbaum said. "We are looking for one of them to separate themselves from the pack and stake a claim to the starting job. It would be nice if somebody jumped right in and took the job, but it is going to be a weekly battle to see who we will put in the cage."