

## **Ice Quality**

This season, like most seasons, had its share of successes as well as a few challenges with maintaining the high quality product that each of our members expect to see.

On a positive, we were fortunate to have Bryan Brown step in as our new Ice Team Manager this season. Bryan is a talented and dedicated Ice Technician who is always looking to improve his skills, which is necessary to maintain great conditions as the environment changes throughout the season. Thank you Bryan for all your hard work this year, and to your team for all their efforts in continually working to provide the best ice possible for our membership. We look forward to seeing you and your team next season!

Along with the staffing change, the Ice Quality team is happy to share updates regarding the improvement of some critical pieces of equipment including our new Ice Scrapper which arrived early in the new year. This machine has replaced a piece of equipment that was already previously well used upon our acquisition, and has lived well past its expected lifespan. Along with this, we will also be updating our condenser located at the front of the facility. This is expected to be replaced over the off-season thanks to the assistance of a grant from the City of Barrie.

Finally, on the recommendation from Canada Curling Stone and in conjunction with our Ice Managers advise, we are able to share that the decision was made to send our rocks in for refurbishment. We will be having new incerts installed improving the running surface and the strike bands reprofiled which is critical in order to extend the life of our rocks for decades to come. We anticipate that this will help address the only major challenge we faced this year, which was finding a good amount of consistent curl each and every day across each sheet.

Last year we completed the season with an increasing amount of debris on the ice, which caused plenty of frustration for those affected. After many weeks of tracking and collecting data, eliminating causes, and following up with staff and membership, it was agreed that the most likely and primary source of the debris had come from our own member's equipment; mostly anti-sliders (grippers) and rubber soles. Whether it was from a poor quality product, a bad batch of product in the community, or a lack of maintenance/replacement, our largest difference in ice quality came at the point when grippers were changed or cleaned en masse. Therefore, as a first step in correcting this issue, we shared reminders to change your grippers at the start of every season, and provided the tools and tips for how to clean your grippers effectively. We continued to share advice over the season on when and how frequently you should replace various pieces of equipment including grippers and broom heads or broom head covers, in an effort to help keep our ice in excellent condition. I am happy to share that this effort, with your assistance, has greatly reduced the amount of issues that stem from dirty ice. We would like to thank everyone for your efforts in maintaining a clean curling surface and we are confident that we will be able to further improve the quality of our ice by following those simple steps.

The number of feedback forms submitted this past year by our membership was much lower than that which was submitted the year prior. These forms are a benefit for our Ice Team, as they allow us to react as quickly as possible when negative trends in ice conditions are discovered. They often allow us to resolve issues or pinpoint the cause of a change in the conditions much faster than having to hear about it through word of mouth. So we encourage you to continue to provide feedback via the tablet in the upstairs lounge for your immediate feedback during season, or use the link to the forms on our website if you choose to share your experiences once home. We do actively read these feedback forms and do rely on them as an additional tool to keep us on top of any changes, large or small, in order to maintain a consistent ice surface.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dave Hardwick