

Ice Quality

Last season, like all seasons, had its share of successes and challenges with maintaining a high quality product that each of our members would be proud of. The great number of feedback forms submitted last year by our membership (a 300% increase over the previous year) was a tremendous benefit for our Ice Team. This feedback allowed the team to react as quickly as possible when negative trends in ice conditions were discovered, and often allowed us to resolve issues or pinpoint the cause of a change in conditions much faster than having to hear about it through word of mouth. Therefore, we will continue to provide the tablet in the lounge for your immediate feedback this season, as well as post a 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 change, large or small, in order to maintain a consistent ice surface.

Early last season the feedback was favourable in general, especially from those who participated in that year's Stu Sells events, along with the feedback from the many members coming back from the summer break. But over time and most noticeably this spring, we did receive consistent valuable feedback with regards to an increase in picks and some inconsistencies with curl and speed. We reacted quickly and did our best to narrow down the source of these issues by having the HVAC system serviced, the Ice Plant system (Ice Mistress) monitored, our ice consultant reviewed staff training and techniques, and checked the ice equipment and tools for maintenance and serviced them as necessary. Along with this, we also checked several other environmental factors (i.e. Rubber Backboards and Carpet) along with members equipment quality. After many weeks of tracking and collecting data, 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 is from a poor quality product, a bad batch of products, 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 will be sharing reminders to change your grippers at the start of every season, and providing tips on how to clean your grippers. We will also share advice over the upcoming 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.

During and post Covid, it was the decision of the board to move to an Ice Team format. This allowed us to save money when we needed it the most (being fiscally responsible), while still giving us access to the knowledge of a CurlON Ice Team member to get us through the pandemic with a good ice surface while staying within budget. We feel this model was the right choice to get us through the pandemic for a number of other reasons beyond the cost savings aspect. Primarily, we did not feel it was a responsible approach to put all of the ice maintenance duties "into one basket" having one primary full-time technician covering the majority of the work. By spreading the work across a team, it would give us greater flexibility with coverage within the ice schedule in the event that someone was required to quarantine for an extended

time. As we are now transitioning to a new normal, we feel that this model is no longer the strongest option for our club in providing top quality ice.

As we move into this season, we have again listened to the opinions of our membership, and at their direction, we have decided to recruit an Ice Operations Manager for the 2023-2024 season. As such, we are happy to announce that Bryan Brown has accepted this new role with our club and has been a welcome addition to our team for this season. Bryan comes highly recommended to us and brings with him several years of experience working as an ice technician in various clubs throughout our region. Bryan has also had the opportunity to work with ice teams managing the installation and maintenance of ice for some of the games best events. He is very passionate about the work he does and is always looking for ways to improve his craft. He is dedicated in providing us with great ice for the upcoming season, so if you see Bryan in the club, please feel free to say hi and introduce yourself...I am sure he would be interested in hearing your feedback.

On a final note, I would like to recognize and thank the 2022-2023 Ice Team for their hard work and dedication through the last season, as well as the many volunteers and members who assisted this team over the past few seasons.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dave Hardwick