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By Sarah Pearson - Jan 21, 2020 | 0 comments



Hundreds of spectators braved the cold Saturday night to check out the action at the 1883 Black Ice Pond Hockey Championship at White Park on Jan 25, 2019.

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When it comes to the Black Ice Pond Hockey Tournament, without good quality ice to play hockey on, you've just got a black pond at White Park. Which is why this year's tournament was nearly postponed from Jan. 24 to 26 until Feb. 7 through 9.

Record high temps on Jan. 11 and 12 really did a number on the ice and though the air temperatures quickly dropped to the 20s, it's continued to be sunny, which can keep the ice from firming up.

"The warm weather did create a bit of havoc," said Chris Brown, chairman of the Black Ice board, on Wednesday last week.

On Friday, they announced the tournament would be postponed. But then, Monday an email went out saying it was back on!

"We are very sorry, but we are going to go back to the original date," Brown wrote in an email to players. Due to the presidential primary the Tuesday following the postponement date, there was no hotel availability in the city.

"The weather and pond have improved significantly over the last 24 hours and we feel that we should make the change back to the original date," Brown wrote in the email.

Warming weather has caused issues with the scheduling of the tournament several years in a row.

In 2019, the games were held in January as originally scheduled, however, the first day was canceled due to too warm temperatures.

In 2018, the Black Ice Pond Hockey Tournament was pushed into early February.

In 2017, it was also pushed two weeks out, into February.

In 2016, games were played in boots instead of skates and the finals had to be completed indoors at the Douglas N. Everett Arena.

Earlier, in 2012, even after being postponed two weeks, several games were still canceled due to slushy ice.

This is the 10th anniversary of the Black Ice Pond Hockey Tournament.

The games are a homecoming of sorts. Concord has a long history with hockey. The first organized hockey game played in the U.S. was at St. Paul's School's pond. The city is also home to hockey greats and Olympians Douglass Everett and Tara Mounsey.

# Black Ice Pond Hockey postponed, then not

Concord's 10th anniversary tournament is under way on a rink that's firming up with the help of a cold front. Shows that they can fit on the ice and in the three-day schedule, Brown said. That means there are more than 650 players.

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"We can't really get more on the pond without playing all night," he said.

Like previous years, there will be more activities than just hockey -- though of course, that's the main attraction. There will be food trucks and other concessions, a heated spectator tent and fire pits.

Finished over the summer and re-opened for the first time during the tournament is the skate house at White Park, the Merrimack Lodge.

Though the main hockey-playing doesn't begin til Friday, the fun begins Wednesday with a kick-off reception at Buffalo Wild Wings for players, sponsors and volunteers.

On Thursday night, the younger crowd will take to the ice with matches for the Concord Capitals, New England Wildcats, N.H. Avalanche and the N.H. Junior Monarchs. Concessions, warming tent, family games and a silent auction will run during the matches.

Friday through Sunday will run the adult matches with divisions for 18+ men elite, 18+ open men, 18+ recreational mixed A, 18+ recreational mixed B, 18+ women open, 18+ women recreational, 35+ men A, 35+ men B, 50+ men A and 50+ men B.

During the weekend, family games, sales, silent auction, public skating and concessions will continue.

On Friday night, the annual fireworks display is scheduled.

Due to limited parking in the area, shuttles will run between downtown parking garages and White Park. On Saturday and Sunday only, the Concord High School and UNH School of Law parking lots will be open to the public. You can also park on the street where legal.

For more information, including a schedule of when teams are playing, visit blackicepondhockey.com.



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Mary Anne Connolly of Weare gets ready to play for the Galoots Saturday at the Black Ice Pond Hockey Tournament at White Park. Feb 2018

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