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Black Ice Pond Hockey Championship launches in Concord

Previously postponed for weather



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CONCORD, N.H. — After the Black Ice Pond Hockey Championship was delayed because of warm weather, it is now underway this weekend.

But the expected conditions on Sunday have already forced organizers to make another change.

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Everywhere you look there is action in Concord's White Park.

"It's fun. It's fast-paced. It's different from playing on a regular rink," said Joe Dichiara, of Long Island, New York.

Now in its eighth year, the Black Ice Pond Hockey Championship has become an annual New Hampshire tradition.

"I've played a handful of these tournaments -- always a good time, good people coming through and a lot of spectators, as you see. We try to put on a show for them," one player said.

Nearly 700 players from 92 teams are on the ice this weekend, facing fierce competition in the Granite State.

Some fly across the country every year for the four-day tournament.

Ken Sansone comes from San Francisco, California. He said he comes for "the comradery and, let's face it, when you're 40-something years old, you don't get to do things that people pay attention to and that count anymore."

The eight rinks are carefully maintained. The games were supposed to start in January but were postponed because of warm weather.

"I'm disappointed that it got postponed. I'm also really happy that it didn't get canceled and I just thought it was really cool that we still had it," said Brad Sawyer, of Concord.

This year's championship features live entertainment and youth hockey games to bring families together around a sport with a rich history in New Hampshire.

"Being in the middle of the city brings a lot of people out of the houses to come out to this kind of unofficial winter festival," said Chris Brown, board member of the Black Ice Pond Hockey Association.

Most of the games will be played outdoors, but on Sunday, the championship games will be inside the Everett Arena because of forecasted rain.