



CONCORD

Pond hockey tournament slips over ice

2-week delay due to warm weather

By BEN LEUBSDORF
Monitor staff

This weekend's 1883 Black Ice Pond Hockey Championship has been postponed two weeks after a warm spell left the ice at White Park unsafe for skating.

The outdoor hockey tournament, which had been scheduled to begin tomorrow and run through Sunday, will instead be held Feb. 10-12 in a bid to give the ice on the pond time to thicken, said Chris Brown, the tournament's main organizer and the president and chief operating officer of New Hampshire Distributors.

"We might have some cold evenings this week, but it doesn't get overly cold," Brown said of the decision yesterday to postpone the event. "For us to put equipment on there probably isn't safe. . . . We'll probably be swimming by the end of the weekend."

Brown said organizers didn't want to cancel the event outright.

"We've put so much effort into it and we have so many elements that are involved in it. . . . We're too far down the line to feel comfortable pulling the plug," he said.

The Concord Insider, which is published weekly by the Monitor, is one of the event's sponsors.

Last year's inaugural tournament was hailed by city officials as a big success, attracting 50 teams and thousands of spectators

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Chris Brown, organizer of the 1883 Black Ice Pond Hockey Championship

to White Park. Cold, mostly clear weather meant the ice was in good shape for three days of hockey.

But this winter's relatively mild conditions kept the pond at White Park from opening to skating until Jan. 16. And the pond closed a week later, Monday, as warm temperatures, rain and fog caused the ice to deteriorate.

Tuesday's high of 49 degrees - 18 degrees above normal, according to the National Weather Service - didn't help. Daytime highs are expected to remain above the freezing point through the weekend.

There's no guarantee Concord will see a cold snap in the next two weeks, but organizers and city officials are hopeful.

"The ice surface was perfect for last weekend's Winter Carnival," Brown said. "It can rebound. You just need a couple of real cold

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Monitor file

Matt Swain (center), playing on the Jack Edwards Teeth hockey team, chases the puck along with team 98 players Ryan Proulx (left) and Brendan Norton during a White Park Division game at the Black Ice Pond Hockey Championship in 2011.

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days to plane it and flood it and get it to the point where you can really use it."

The 70 teams registered for this year's tournament will have the option of playing in two weeks, getting half their money back or applying the \$600 fee to enter next year's tournament, Brown said. Vendors were being contacted yesterday, Brown said, "and it seems like everyone is very understanding of the

BLACK ICE DATE SLIPS

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fickle nature of Mother Nature and just how this whole winter has gone." (Ben Leubsdorf can be reached at 369-3307 or bleubsdorf@cmonitor.com.)

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