

"There is nothing  
so powerful as truth"  
DANIEL WEBSTER



# NEW HAMPSHIRE SUNDAY NEWS

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## Passion, pride meet in pond hockey series

By ALLEN LESSELS  
New Hampshire Union Leader

CONCORD — The Gov's got game. So says Ray Champagne, who knows a thing or two about ice hockey. New Hampshire Gov. John Lynch and Champagne, a star of the Manchester Blackhawks of old, are among the 350 or so hockey players lining them up this weekend for the inaugural 1883 Black Ice

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Concord's Mark Ruddy of the Senior Turkey Pond Flyers is pressured by Gov. John Lynch, right, of the Lynch Gang, during the 1883 Black Ice Pond Hockey Championship this weekend in Concord.

MARK BOLTON/UNION LEADER

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## Pond hockey

Pond Hockey Championship at White Park. "What a weekend," said Bruce Gillies, who grew up in Concord and played football and hockey in the mid-1980s at the University of New Hampshire. "You can't beat it. We all skated here as kids. This is pretty special."

The Black Ice event, a celebration of the lengthy and rich hockey heritage in the state and city, is the kick-off of a three-week stretch of outdoor hockey tournaments in New Hampshire. The semifinals and finals start this morning at 9 a.m. and will wrap up by noon.

More than 150 teams, nearly double last season's total, are signed up for the second New England Hockey Pond Classic, which runs from Friday to Sunday next weekend on Meredith Bay in Lake Winnepesaukee.

And the Manchester Monarchs Pond Hockey Classic, a one-day event on Dorrs Pond in Manchester, debuts on Feb. 12.

It all started here on Friday. Heck, it all really started not far up the road from White Park almost 130 years ago. It was 1883 when, it is believed, the sport made its debut in this country at St. Paul's School in Concord.

Turkey Pond at St. Paul's became renowned for its black ice, the best around for skating, and shortly after the turn of the century the legendary Hobey Baker, soon to become one of the biggest names in amateur hockey, arrived at SPS.

A finely crafted replica of Baker's stick will be awarded to the winner of each of five divisions today.

Photographs of Baker and hockey at St. Paul's and across the city filled a large makeshift hockey locker room on White Street, between the park and the University of New Hampshire Law School.

Gillies had just gotten off the ice with his teammates, including Lee "Lebo" Blossom, who came out of Concord and went on to star at Boston College. They changed up in one corner of the room.

Champagne and Lynch and the rest of the "Lynch Gang" claimed a far corner of the room between their two games on Friday.

Champagne, who arrived in Manchester from Canada in 1964, turns 66 next month. He had a couple of goals in the team's first game, a loss, and offered an assessment of the governor's game. "I think he plays heads-up hockey," Champagne said. "He knows where the play is going to be. He's got a good eye for the game."

Lynch, a 1974 graduate of UNH, reminisced about playing hockey on the ponds around Durham with his fraternity brothers, including university hockey players such as Gordie Clark, Rick Olmstead, Cliff Cox and Jamie Hislop. "We'd go down early and play all day," Lynch said. "There's nothing like playing outside on the ponds. . . This is really meant to be fun. And it's about the camaraderie in the locker room."

Soon the Lynch Gang was back on the ice and the governor, who scored a goal in the opener, added a couple more.

On the pond, pucks thudded off boards on the six rinks made of 2-by-4s, skates cut through the ice and an announcer occasionally issued reminders that checking and goaltending were not allowed in the four-on-four games.

The reminders were sometimes heeded, sometimes not, in games that got a little, well, spirited, at times.

Jack Edwards' Teeth, a team that included former UNH standouts Mick Mounsey, Tim Walsh and Corey-Joe Cicek, battled Team 82 on one rink.

Tom Champagne, a Concord High captain in 1948 and one of the few men still living who played for the city's famed Sacred Heart Hockey Club, watched as his son, Tom, also a former Concord High captain, played Lynch's team.

Ray Champagne told Tom Champagne Sr. once that their families might have been related back in Canada, but they're not sure of the connection.

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There's more online at [UNIONLEADER.COM](http://UNIONLEADER.COM)

▶ Images from the ice: Look online for a gallery of photos from the pond hockey championship.

The hockey brought back plenty of memories for Tom Champagne Sr.

"We played on a lot of ponds, too," he said. "Long Pond, Jordan's Pond, Turkey Pond. Everyone just seemed to know where to go."

Thanks to Chris Brown and a gang of volunteers and sponsors, White Park was the place to go this weekend.

Plans for the Black Ice championships grew out of a discussion after a tournament game in Meredith last winter, Brown said.

"We said, 'Why not Concord?'" said Brown, the president and chief operating officer of New Hampshire Distributors and a former Concord High player.

Committees and a nonprofit were formed, and sponsors and volunteers jumped on board, all with a mission to enhance outdoor skating in the city and eventually provide a new skate house at White Park. Brown thinks proceeds could reach \$25,000 this year.

Fifty teams — with names such as Pond Jovi, Against Medical Advice and Scared Hitless — signed up, and Brown has already heard from people planning to play next year. He thinks the tournament could grow to at least 75 teams by then.

Jan Joscelyn, Concord High Class of 1993, looks forward to expansion.

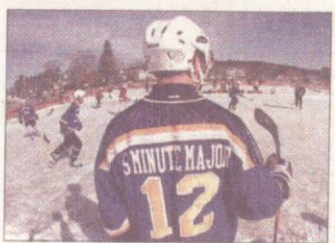
She helped hustle together a team called "Babes of Glory," one of three in the women's division.

"Hopefully, next year we'll have six teams," Joscelyn said and then laughed. "If it gets more established, maybe we can get our own locker room. Right now it's co-ed. Thank God for long underwear."

## Coming up in NEW HAMPSHIRE'S NEWSPAPERS

THE ACTION HEATS UP ON FROZEN LAKES

### A fitting first



Concord claims the distinction of being the site of the first organized hockey game in the United States. This weekend, the Capital City takes the lead again, as the 1883 Black Ice Pond Hockey Championship kicks off a three-week series of major outdoor tournaments in New Hampshire. Among the 50 teams competing in Concord will be the Lynch Gang, featuring Gov. John Lynch.

▶ Sunday

### business

## Protecting the world's water

Tucked inside an innocuous-looking industrial park, Salem-based Horizon Technology is responsible for ensuring the safety of drinking water throughout a good portion of the civilized world. Horizon, indeed, has come a long way since the founding of the company inside an Atkinson garage back in 1992.

▶ Sunday

## Meet the 40 Under Forty

The 2011 class of the Union Leader 40 Under Forty will be unveiled Monday. Meet the young movers and shakers who will help lead New Hampshire in the decades ahead.

▶ Monday's Business

### sports

## Friars and more Friars

With the Wildcats within striking distance of first place in Hockey East, UNH beat reporter Allen Lessels previews key Friday and Saturday games against Providence.

▶ Tomorrow



# New Hampshire News

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**UNION LEADER**

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## Pond hockey preparations



BOB LAPREE/UNION LEADER

Volunteers lay out the six hockey rinks on the pond in Concord's White Park Thursday in preparation for the opening games today in the first 1883 Black Ice Pond Hockey Championship tournament. The event commemorates the first organized hockey games played at St. Paul's School in 1883. Fifty teams, 40 from the Concord area, are entered. Games will run through noon Sunday with 100 games played. At right, volunteers Joe Farrelly, left, and Dunc Walsh set up the boards for the outdoor rinks.



## HOCKEY

### On the pond

The six hockey rinks took shape on Thursday at White Park in Concord and the weather forecast for the weekend looks good.

All systems are go for the 1883 Black Ice Pond Hockey Championship — named in honor of the earliest days of hockey in the country at St. Paul's School in Concord — that begins with opening ceremonies this morning at 9:45 at White Park.

Game action starts at 10:10 a.m. with four contests, including a clash between Capital City Diner and Against Medical Advice in the 35-plus age division.

Fifty teams are entered in five different divisions from an 18-plus open division to a 50-plus group and the tournament runs through Sunday. After a series of round-robin games, the semifinals and finals will be played on Sunday morning.

The Black Ice Pond Hockey Championship kicks off a run of three weekend's worth of outdoor hockey in the state.

The New England Pond Hockey Classic is set for Lake Winnepesaukee in Meredith from Feb. 4 to Feb. 6 and the one-day Manchester Pond Hockey Classic will be held on Dorrs Pond on Feb. 12.

