

# CONCORD MONITOR

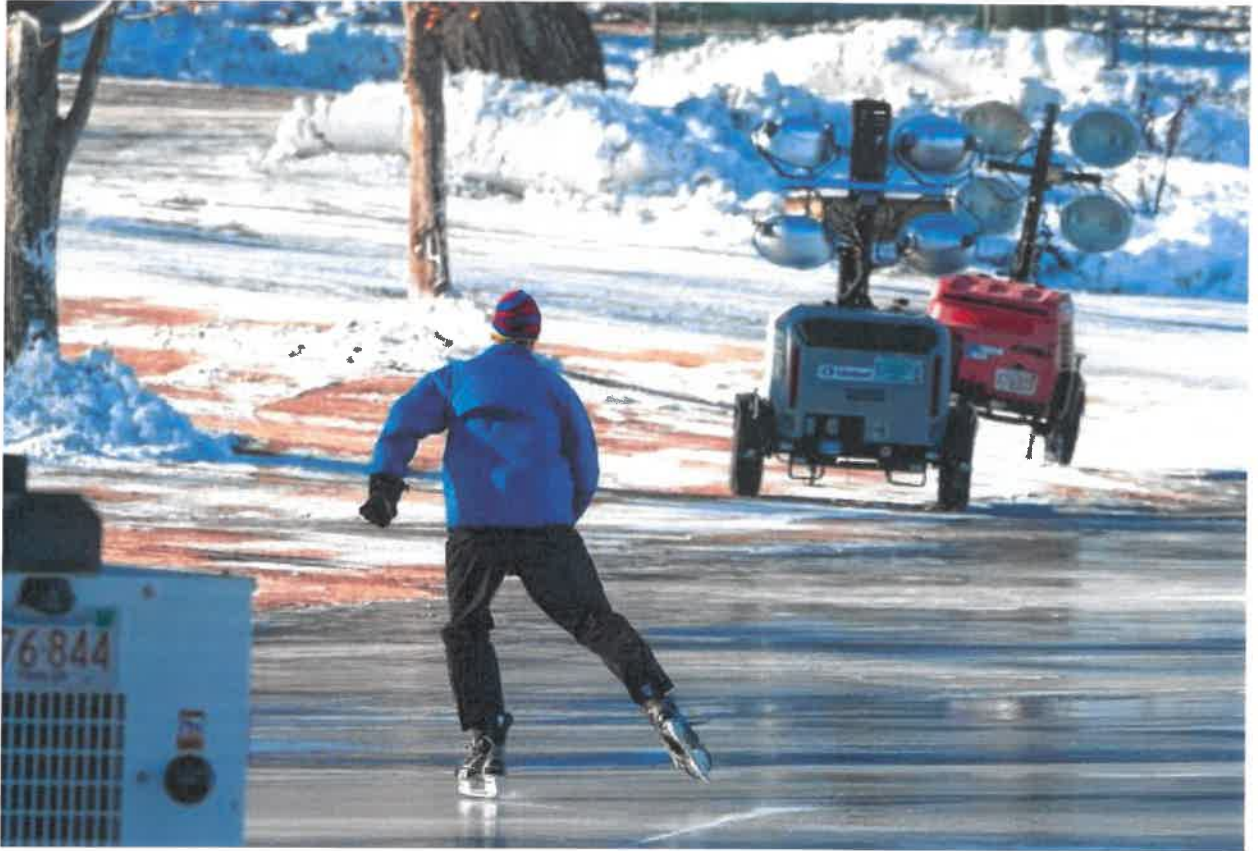
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## Black Ice hockey tournament on collision course with ‘bomb cyclone’ snowstorm



Bob Cotone of Tasker Landscaping helps set up the portable lights on Wednesday at the pond in White Park for the Black Ice Tournament, which is set to run from Friday through Sunday. GEOFF FORESTER photos / Monitor staff» [Buy this Image](#)



A skater moves around the ice at White Park on Wednesday as the area is set up for the Black Ice Tournament this week.



Gavin Jello (left) and Tim Moore of Tasker Landscaping start to set up the portable lights for the Black Ice Tournament on Wednesday morning, January 26, 2022. The tournament runs from Friday through Sunday even with the snow storm sceduled to hit Friday night into Saturday. GEOFF FORESTER—Monitor staff» Buy this Image



Workers start to set up the tents along White Street in front of NH Law on White Street in preparation of the Black Ice Tournament set for this weekend. GEOFF FORESTER—Monitor staff» Buy this Image

By BRACKETT LYONS

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This weekend's Black Ice Pond Hockey tournament is on a collision course with a major Nor'easter.

The annual event that takes place at White Park in Concord is scheduled to begin Thursday and run through Sunday. Unfortunately, a storm is predicted to dump between 12 to 18 inches of snow on the capital starting Friday evening with the worst of the storm hitting Saturday, according to [AccuWeather](#).

Tournament organizer Christopher Brown said they're in a wait-and-see mode with plans to forge ahead for as long as they can keep the ice clear.

"Our goal is to have a full schedule played in the tournament," Brown said Wednesday afternoon. "It may get to a point on Saturday that we can't keep up with the personnel. And at that point, we may have to you know, stop games."

Pond hockey is a game dependent on the elements and Concord's annual tournament has been dogged in the past by warm weather and even rain. This year the temperature has been plenty cold and Brown is confident the tournament can adapt to whatever mother nature throws its way, even a bomb cyclone. The bulk of games is scheduled for Friday and Saturday with playoffs to take place Sunday morning. Brown said if games are stopped because of snow they will move to Sunday morning and the playoffs will shift to the afternoon and evening.

"Really, it just depends on how quickly the staff at Park and Rec can keep up with the storm and get the snow off and then we can get the rinks in a playable fashion," Brown said.

The severity of the storm is still up in the air. The National Weather Service reports that low pressure is forecast to track northeast towards New England. It could track east and spare the middle of the state from the worst of the storm, or it could rip right through Concord and leave more than a foot of snow behind.

With so much still unknown, the challenge will be to cram as many games as possible on Saturday to try and beat the brunt of the snowfall. The hope is that the lighter precipitation can be managed in-between games to keep the puck moving. At Black Ice, keeping the playing surface clear is up to the players. It's a tradition that teams shovel ice shavings and snow over the boards. From there the city staff uses sweepers to clear the lanes in between the rinks.

The problem with a storm of this magnitude is that all that snow must go somewhere.

"The challenge with a lot of snow is where to put it," said Dan Luker, president of the 1883 Black Ice Hockey Association. "How to get it off those rinks. You can't put a plow on the ice you've got to do it with a bunch of small equipment and a lot of hands. So, it becomes a challenge."

The rinks cover more than an acre of ice.

"It takes hours to move just a few inches and let alone if we're going to have six or seven, eight or nine or a foot," said Brown.

Luker said it's not just the snow that poses an issue, it's also the wind. If gusts get too strong, they may need to take down the light towers and call off night games.

If the games are canceled Saturday, the race will be on to clean the rinks in time for an early Sunday morning start. Luker said he is confident in the capable and committed White Park staffers and Crew.

"They're there on top of their game and they're a big part of why this tournament happens," said Luker.

As for spectators, both Luker and Brown were confident that the tents can handle the storm.

“The tents are really solid and well anchored. So, I’m not really concerned about that,” said Luker.

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