



2007 – 2008 Brewer Skate Park Report

Pacers Speed Skating Club of Ottawa

Annual General Meeting

Lakeside Gardens

June 01, 2008

Contrary to popular belief, ice surfaces were increased at the Brewer Skate Park for the 2007-2008 skating season. The smaller of the two ice boxes is now almost twice its original size and serves the many hockey players who attend Brewer Park. However, the ice surface increase did not cause the operations grant to swell.

Nevertheless, the increase in ice surface did not deter us. In late November and early December 2007, we received an abundance of snow and on Saturday, November 29, base ice preparations commenced. On Tuesday, December 03, Joe McGuire and myself attended the City of Ottawa Ice Making Workshop while volunteers were at the Oval packing snow on the 3 ice surfaces.

On December 05th, I realized that I was in for quite a treat and wondered how Ted was still married. The base preparations lasted for a couple of weeks and the facility officially opened its doors to the general public on Monday, December 17 as Coach Gerry and Coach Sarah held the first of many practices on the Brewer Oval.

The two hockey ice boxes opened on Tuesday, December 18 and were in rough shape due to the lack of hockey parent volunteers. On Friday, December 21st, after much hard work by the many volunteers the hockey boxes were opened and from that point on, hockey players enjoyed Canada's second favourite sport daily and nightly.

Attendance / Duration of season

The Brewer Skating Park remained open until March 5th, 5 days past the City's official end of season, for 79 days of skating. Unfortunately, due to warm weather and the need for ice repairs due to the warm weather, Brewer Park was closed on 15 of the 79 days.

Because of the excellent ice conditions, the many special speed skating events such as the Provincial Championships and The Bytown Marathon and the many special key functions, 20,586 people attended the park during the 2007-2008 season.

Average usage in person-hours per day:

- 2007-2008 = 322
- 2006-2007 = 303
- 2005-2006 = 415
- 2004-2005 = 279
- 2003-2004 = 325

Special Events held on the Oval

The 2007-2008 skating season at the Brewer Skate Park included various special events, which were held on the Oval surface. The events included:

- Ottawa Pacers Speed Skating Club Long Track Training Camp
- Provincial Long Track Speed Skating Championship
- The Sunshine Foundation of Canada fundraising skate-a-thon
- City of Ottawa Recreational Skating School (learn to skate program)
- Bytown (MSI) International Marathon Skating Event

Snow Removal Equipment

This season as in past seasons, we made good use of equipment supplied to us on contract by Mountainview Golf & Athletic Turf Specialists. The snow removal equipment is rented and necessary in the daily operations of the Brewer Skate Park and in the maintenance of the ice surfaces and of the park's grounds.

- a fuel and maintenance contract
- a tractor containing a snowblower and brush attachment
- a pick-up truck for the hot water delivery to the Oval surface and
- a walking snowblower

Assistance with ice maintenance; snow removal and flooding was received again this season as in the past, from The Ottawa South Minor Hockey Association and from The Old Ottawa South Hockey Playing Dads. However when the flooding takes place on Friday and Saturday nights, a large number of hockey players move over to the Oval and engage in playing hockey on the Oval.

Outdoor Rink Permits

- Season-long permits by OCMHA (Mon, Tues, Wed, January and February)
- The “Old Ottawa South Hockey Playing Dads” (Saturday mornings)
- Ottawa South Old-Timers Hockey League” (Thursday evenings 9 – 10pm)
- Westboro Academy’s “Skate Day” (one time permit)
- Ottawa Travellers Hockey Team (Mondays 6:00 to 7:00, January)
- Louis Riel Sports Etudes School (every Wed, January and February)
- Lycee Claudel School Fundraiser (one time permit)
- Concourse Gate Otus Group Fun Skate (one time permit)

Employees Greg Bennett and Steve Halliburton

The Ottawa Pacers, through the City of Ottawa, hired Mr. Greg Bennett and Mr. Stephen Halliburton for rink attendants and ice maintenance duties. Mr. Bennett maintained his snow removal duties as in the past and completed his work mostly in daytime hours. This year, he was given limited ice making / maintenance duties. He did however play a major and active role in base ice preparation and operation of the heavy equipment (tractor) for snow removal purposes.

Employee Steve Halliburton was tasked with ice making, snow removal and rink attendant duties on a regular basis in the evening hours. He attends school in the daytime and is mostly available to work at night. Steve does not operate the heavy snow removal equipment (tractor) but does make use of the walk behind snowblower which he uses in the hockey boxes and the hot water truck which he uses on the Oval.

In the past, both employees shared a schedule of 9 ‘shifts’ per week (6:00 pm – closing every night, plus 1:00 pm – 5:00 pm on weekends). This season, Greg worked mostly daytime hours and only when snow removal was required and Steve worked the evening shifts and on weekends.

City Support

The City of Ottawa personnel continues to support the efforts of the Pacers Speed Skating Club of Ottawa in the management and the operation of the Brewer Skate Park. It is necessary to contact members of the City of Ottawa to arrange scheduling and to coordinate the delivery of equipment and services for the various events that take place at the Brewer Skate Park.

Everyone from the electrician who ensures that the trailers are safely connected, to George who delivers the light poles, the lights and picks up the Oval ramps, to the Zamboni drivers at the Brewer Arena who accommodate us by shaving the ice during the competitions, a great big thank you. They have all been most helpful and the assistance that they provided me throughout the 2007-2008 skating season, is welcome, necessary, and makes my role as The Brewer Skate Park manager, a pleasant one.

Summer Equipment storage

All of the equipment necessary in the daily operations of the Brewer Skate Park has been stored in the spare room at the Brewer Arena and in the office located within the red shack. The safety mats are being stored at the SensPlex and will remain there until required next season.

Recommendations

Snow removal equipment

The tractor with the snowblower and broom attachment, which is being rented from Mountainview Turf and used to complete snow removal on the grounds of the Brewer Skate Park is equipment that is mandatory in the daily operations of the Brewer Skate Park. Without this tractor, the 400-meter Oval and the two hockey rinks would not operate as they do.

Snow accumulation in the 2007-2008 skating season was extremely high and because of it, the snow removal equipment was in operation 69 of the 79 days and evenings during the skating season.

However, as the most frequent operator of the tractor, I report that this equipment is unsafe to operate in its current form and state. The cabin, which houses the operator, is open and this creates three health and safety concerns that I would like to share with you :

- The tractor uses diesel fuel and the tail pipe is located at the front left side of the motor, in front of the driver. As the tractor is being driven forward, the fumes from the exhaust pipe are automatically directed towards the driver who breathes them in.

- The snowblower portion of this equipment is located at the rear. In order to operate the snowblower successfully, the driver must look to the rear to ensure that the blower is collecting snow and to be able to see where the tractor is being directed. While this is being done, the snow that is being collected in the chute is being forced out as the tractor reverses and as the snow comes out of the chute, it will inevitably end up in the face of the driver who is sitting in the open cabin.
- The third and final issue is one of that deals with safety again. The cabin of the tractor is open and makes the operation of the tractor difficult and unsafe during the cold winter months of Ottawa. The driver is experiencing extremely cold temperatures while the tractor is in operation. For instance, if the tractor is travelling on the Oval surface and the outside temperature is minus 15, the driver will feel that the temperature doubles and now creates a dangerous temperature of minus 30 which the driver has to unnecessarily contend with.

I have spoken with Mr. Bill Hamilton of Mountainview Turf about the concerns. I will request pricing from him for the rental of similar tractor with a closed cabin. I will wait for direction from Board because I proceed further

Oval Committee

I propose that the current structure of the Oval Committee be revamped to one, which is official, with a secretary who will record minutes, a volunteer coordinator, a fundraiser coordinator and representatives from Masters, Junior Long Trackers and a long track coach. The committee also needs to have one of its members named, as Director or Manager and items need to be actioned.

Volunteers required

This is a very popular topic and one, which many like to voice opinions on, just like the price of gas. It's very simple, the Brewer Skate Park need additional volunteers to complete the many duties that are currently being attended to by few people. Without more volunteers the Oval will suffer and the services currently being provided will begin to deteriorate.

Some volunteers duties include and are not limited to:

- office management
- trailer coordination
- track marking
- mat installation
- public relations

As Ted has suggested in the past, the “office manager” role is a crucial role. The office manager would be responsible for tasks such as

- scheduling rink attendants
- administering rink attendant activities and duties
- serving as City and public contact
- scheduling and notification of Club and community events
- coordinating skate rentals and skating instruction

“ Get involved before it's too late....., we need your help ”

Pete Gauthier

Brewer Skate Park Manager (2007-2008)
Pacers Speed Skating Club of Ottawa