

Super Time Playing Pond Hockey

By MIKE NELSON, CGCS
Superintendent, Dacotah Ridge Golf Club

The weekend of January 21-22 I spent outdoors. Not ice fishing, skiing or snowmobiling.

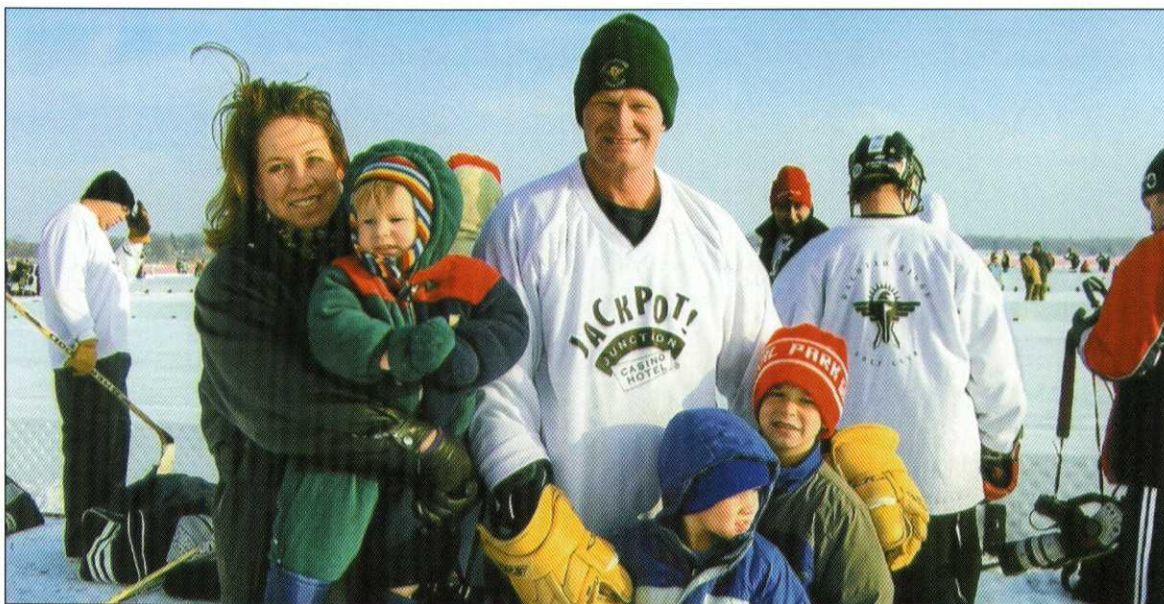
Along with myself, there were around 760 people playing hockey on Lake Calhoun in Minneapolis. The first annual U.S. Pond Hockey Championships was the event. There were a total of 128 teams that were from around the country involved; 100 of the teams were in the Open Division, there also was a Women's and Senior Division

Here is how the format went. Each team played four skaters on the ice at a time with subs that rotated in. There was no goalie; the area to shoot at to score was a six-foot wide goal that was six-inches high. The middle portion of the goal was blocked off leaving a foot at each corner of the goal to shoot at. We played 17-minute halves with a 3-minute break in the middle. In order to accommodate the number of teams there were 25 rinks constructed that were about 1/2 the size of a regulation rink. The rinks had 18-inch high boards to contain the puck. The puck was to stay on the ice except for the occasional saucer pass and in true pond hockey fashion teams on deck had to shovel the rink.

This was hockey the way nature intended – on the pond, outside in the elements with cold fingers from lacing up in the snowbank. Pond or outdoor hockey has a special place for many hockey players, as this is where they were able to hone their skills, hang out and make new friends.

The weather was great for the event, it was just cold enough to keep things frozen. The wind had a bit of a bite but it was pond hockey so the weather shouldn't be perfect! The ice conditions were very rough in some spots and sometimes the puck would bounce your way, sometimes it didn't.

I scouted the rosters of the teams we were playing against and became a little concerned when I saw some former U of M and NHL players. We played three games on Saturday and while we skated competitively with each and every team we played we managed to stay out of the win column. The competitive juices were flowing and there was what I'll call "spirited play" at times. At the end of the day we were all exhausted but everyone on team Jackpot Junction/ Dacotah Ridge had a great time. I'm already looking forward to next year. My groin and back muscles should be healed by then.



TAKING A BREAK FROM THE HOCKEY GAMES ON LAKE CALHOUN IN MINNEAPOLIS for a little family time is Mike Nelson, CGCS, Dacotah Ridge CC. with his wife Michelle, Parker (2), Joshua (5) and Blake (7)

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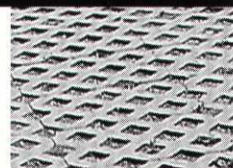
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