

The Next Season "Frozen Lake Mille Lacs"

By **BARRY HINES**
Izaty's Resort

The question was looming, who was going to take over the ice work at Izaty's Resort? With many factors determining, of course, i.e. painting tee blocks, benches, grinding reels, washing equipment, budgeting, some much needed downtime for vacations, PTO and 9:00 start times after a long golf season! I explained to my staff that is what November and March are for, to get ready for the golf season. It was an easy decision for my #1 staff and myself to experience something new while still enjoying a job that is seven days per week and allows us to deal directly with customers. How many golf courses can employ 2 Assistant Superintendents, 1 Foreman, 2 Mechanics and 3 Amigos year around. Maybe only here at Izaty's Resort in the beautiful state of Minnesota.



Here is the Ice line-up: Barry Hines (Rookie), Adam Murphy

(Rookie), Jorge Xuchil (Rookie), Martin Alvarado (Rookie), Hugo Mendez (Rookie), Demetrio Garcia (Rookie), Mike Edin (3 Years), Brian Rancour (10 Years), Jerry Olson (17 Years). Ready, set, go... let's get to the ice.

14 Fish Houses: 5 - 4 Bunk Houses
4 - 6 Bunk Houses
4 - 9 Bunk Houses
1- Igloo

Customers rent our ice houses from four hours to the longest I have experienced five days. You really get to know who you are fishing with after a couple of days. Showers are available at the resort for those who want them. I thought I had seen it all working on a golf course until one day I saw customers trading perch for more bait.

Our houses range from eight to 12 fishing holes per house, TV's, with DVD players, radios, rattle reels, gas grills and your own personal restrooms. Where can you go and fish but still feel like you're at home?

Ice fishing in Minnesota is a very short season starting with first ice sometime around the middle of December and ending February 28th when houses have to be off the ice. This is a huge business in such a short time frame. We are a small business compared to other businesses that make their year's wages in two months.

Having everything else set aside, the ice is a minor detail compared to all the other work involved in this business. We deal with Mother Nature much like the other nine months on the golf course. Snow, wind and this year's huge temperature changes can cause long stressful days on the lake.

On December 21 we ventured out on Lake Mille Lacs with 12 inches of Good Ice. Our first fish house on the ice was 4 bunk #41. Barry pulled the first houses out with a J.D. 5200 with Mike and Adam at his side with a 4 wheeler and snowmobile. Life on the edge is our motto. No problems after the first one was out, only 13 more to go. My staff proceeded to get all four bunk and

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Ice Fishing—

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six bunk houses out before the New Year. By the second week of January we had the Igloo and the giant nine bunks out. This is the easiest part. Now with the houses out the real work begins: plowing of roads, marking of roads, blocking, banking of houses, filling 100-pound L.P. tanks, drilling 132 fishing holes and setting depths for each line going into the water. Compare this to changing 132 cups in one day on the golf course.

Explaining working on the ice to the Amigos was quite interesting and still brings a huge smile to my face. 'Yes! I told them I have work for you this winter and it is going to be on the Lago congelado (Frozen Lake). Believe me, many of them said Barry es Loco (Barry is Crazy). I explained to them drilling fish holes is like changing cups. Taking the slush out of the holes is like cleaning around the cups. Straight holes in the ice is what I wanted and they came through. Plowing is like mowing rough, that's how I explained this to them. Cleaning the houses after every

customer leaves and picking up garbage is no different than what we do during the summer. I explained to them this is compared to our tee service program we do daily during the summer months. One thing I found out: ice fishing is that men/women are really no different than golfers during the summer months. They go sometimes where you do not want

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them to go. We roped off areas such as pressure ridges, heaves and cracks, yet people still cannot grasp the concept that those areas are roped off or flagged off because we want them to stay out of for safety purposes...but, oh no, they are adventurous and have to see for themselves.

Tools we used this year on the ice: J.D. Tractor, Kubota Tractor with Blower, Toro Workman, Ford Backhoe, 3 Chevy Trucks, 1 V-plow truck, Bridges, Shovels, 3-ton Jacks, Augers, Chisels, Aqua Vu, GPS,

Vacuum Cleaners, globes, mantles and generators.

Icehouse locations are changed bi-weekly. Depending on ice conditions and rental usage they are sometimes moved more frequently. Our busiest times are Thursday thru Sunday with our rentals. Sunday afternoon and Monday is clean up day and house-moving day. Tuesday and Wednesday is 100 lb. LP tank day....28 of them. This is great training for World's Strongest Man Competition.

One of the luxuries that we most enjoy working the ice is meeting a variety of people from so many parts of the world. Some of which include a group of 24 guys from Atlanta, Georgia who have never been on ice, to a lady that works for 3M from the country of Malaysia. It's extremely comforting seeing the pleasure on some of the faces when customers see our houses, especially the igloo.

Yes, we were very successful putting people on walleye. The largest was 30 fi" and pushing 12 pounds, and plus we can't forget about all the perch that were landed, (Eel pout are a whole different story)! It all makes for a successful season.



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