

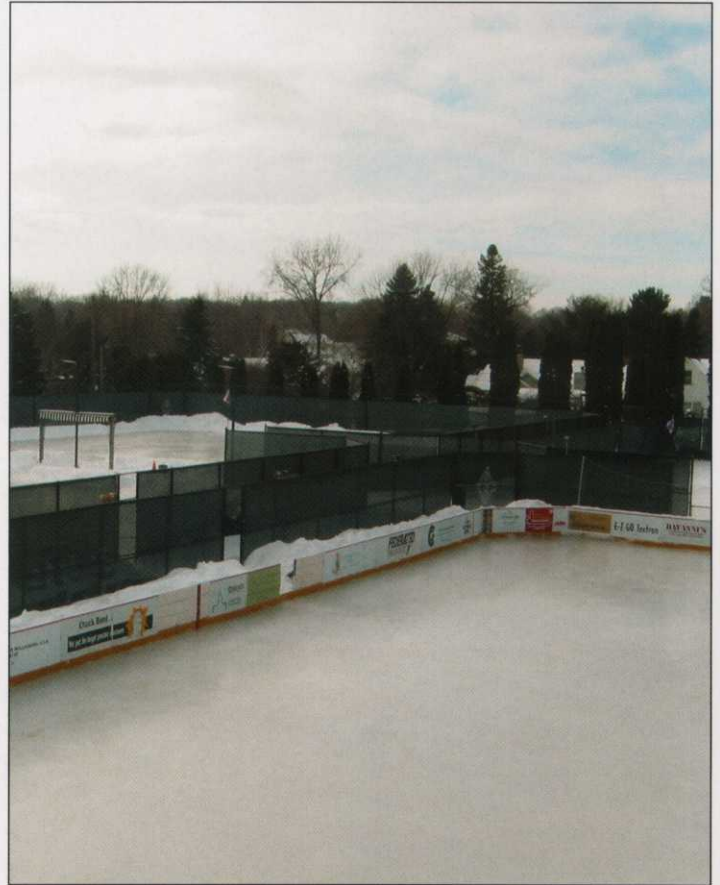
# Interlachen: The Club of Hockey

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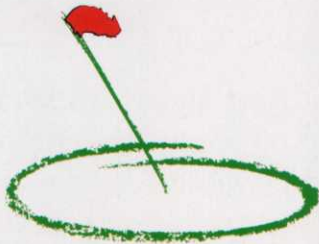
Seven years ago, George Carroll, General Manager of Interlachen Country Club in Edina, Minnesota, had a vision to bolster the winter activities at the club. With his passion for the sport of hockey, George set out to make Interlachen Country Club into "The Club of Hockey" during the winter months. Teamwork from the grounds crew, the building maintenance staff, and the Tennis/Hockey Facilities Manager made this vision a reality.

Each November, the Interlachen tennis facility transforms into the Skating Lodge and ice rinks. Seven clay tennis courts are flooded to make ice rinks. Boards installed on three of the courts make the hockey rink, and in addition, there are two recreational skating rinks, each the size of two tennis courts. Included on one of them, is a curling sheet, for those interested in this growing sport.

The tennis building serves as the warming house, providing restrooms, changing rooms and lockers for skaters. Concessions are served including the normal beverages and snacks, chili and pizzas. A side room is available for small parties. For larger



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events, a tent with heaters is placed on the patio. Two employees serve the concessions and maintain order on the rinks each evening. The skating facility is open from noon till 9 p.m every day, weather permitting.

There has been a tremendous response from the membership for the ice facility. There are weekly broomball games, skating lessons, pick-up hockey games, general skating and even a few stones are slid on the curling sheet. An average of three parties a week have been booked at the skating lodge. These range from children's birthday parties to large corporate holiday events that also utilize the clubhouse meeting and dining facilities.

Interlachen also schedules special events to increase attendance at the Skating Lodge. Wednesday evening is "Spaghetti Night" where a buffet meal is served for the skaters. This type of event brings in 30-45 members and guests every week. Other events include the popular "Skating with Frosty the Snowman," Hockey Clinics with notable hockey players and coaches, "Cocktails, Cigars, and Curling Night," and a New Year's Eve Party.

With all of the events scheduled, it is necessary to maintain good ice conditions for the participants. So what does it take to  
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## The Club of Hockey—

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make and maintain the ice rinks....some good equipment and a lot of time.

After completing research at some of the major Twin Cities' outdoor ice rinks, the Interlachen hockey rink was constructed with side boards made out of 2"x12"s. The boards are stacked four high and sup-



ported by 2x6 braces outside of the rink. They are freestanding and are very solid once they get iced in. Netting is strung above the boards at each end of the rink to catch errant shots. It takes three days for a team of four people to get the rink set up for the season. The boards are maintained each year with a fresh coat of paint, generally done during the late summer.

The majority of skaters use the rinks in the evenings, so lights are necessary for safety. Initially, several 500-watt work lights were placed around the rink. Since then, the club has purchased larger, more permanent lighting. With all of the additional lighting, the electrical service to the Skating Lodge was supplemented with



additional circuits.

The lights and materials for constructing the hockey rink represent the largest cost to build the rinks. To offset these costs, some innovative advertising on the hockey boards has been sold annually to members and to several of the Club's vendors. These signs wrap around the entire rink and give it a professional look. More than 50 companies take advantage of this advertising.

Each day before watering takes place, the ice surface is cleaned of all snow and skate shavings. After a normal night of skating, a Groundmaster with a 4-foot broom is used to sweep the ice. The shavings are then shoveled by hand over the hockey boards. If there is more than a fi inch of snow, a skid loader or a Groundmaster with a snowblower attachment is used to remove the snow. After a snowfall, it can be necessary to have two employees spend an afternoon cleaning the rinks.

The most important and necessary item is a nearby, high-volume water supply. A permit and water meter obtained from the city allows us to tap into a fire hydrant. A hose reel with 300 feet of 1" hose is attached to the fire hydrant. It takes about an hour to flood the rinks with a thin coating of water. Two people are needed, one to spray the water, and another to handle the hose and refill the cups of hot chocolate. The rinks are watered every morning when the temperature is below freezing. When it is cold enough, two or three coats are applied each day to build up the ice surface.

Some more specialized equipment that the club has purchased to provide better ice conditions include a Zamboni and a motorized ice edger. The club obtained a vintage 1950's model Zamboni and had it restored. It does a great job of smoothing out any uneven spots on the ice rinks. The ice edger is a piece of equipment that shaves down the ridge of ice that often forms along the hockey boards.

Even with all of this equipment, the quality of ice can vary greatly due to the weather conditions. No matter how much time is put into the ice surfaces, if the weather isn't cooperating, the quality of ice



will be poor. The rinks have opened up as early as December 5th and can last anywhere from the middle of January to the beginning of March. However, once there has been a significant thaw, it is difficult to get the rinks back up and ready for skaters.

The recreational opportunities and activities for the membership that the ice rinks have provided has been well-received and is significant during a season that has historically been slow at the Country Club. The Skating Facility has proved to be a very useful tool in recruiting additional memberships to the club, especially in the pool and fitness category. Overall, the hockey and ice skating rinks have been a great success for Interlachen County Club, "The Club of Hockey."

