

Don't get caught standing on thin ice

In recent days the thermometer has hovered near the freezing mark during daylight hours and dropped below it in the evenings.

That's a sure sign that bodies of water will solidify.

For the angling enthusiast, that can only mean one thing — another ice fishing campaign is upon us.

While it's time to get the ice auger and ice fishing gear out of storage and prepare the ice hut, extra precautionary measures must be given during periods of first ice.

The biggest concern centres on when a frozen body of water is safe enough to travel on.

A year does not go by without a

snow machine, vehicle or individual plunging into the frigid drink.

To prevent such incidents from happening there are several steps that can be taken to assure a safe and enjoyable outing on frozen pond.

The Ministry of Natural Resources recommends ice thickness of at least three inches or more of clear blue ice to support a group travelling in single file.

Clear blue ice thickness measuring at least 7 1/2 inches can support a two-tonne gross vehicle.

A 2 1/2-gross tonne vehicle can be supported by clear blue ice thickness of at least eight inches.



Mike Hayakawa

Add another two inches of clear blue ice for travelling with a 3 1/2-tonne gross vehicle.

An eight-tonne gross vehicle should be driven on clear blue ice

thickness of at least 12 inches and a 10-tonne gross vehicle on 15 inches.

If you are unfamiliar with a body of water that you intend to fish on, contact local tackle stores in the area or ice hut operators to check on ice thickness.

Be cautious of areas that are usually the last to freeze up or are the first to break free during a thaw. These areas can include river-mouths, shoals, bridges, underwater springs, narrows or places where there's underlying currents.

Be leery of days with extreme winds, which can act as a catalyst to any sudden break up of areas with pressure cracks.

Precaution should also be taken on areas that are blanketed with snow, which acts as an insulator.

When travelling on foot and if in a group, be sure to space yourselves apart in equal distances.

The lead person should carry a spud and check for ice thickness at certain intervals.

It's also wise to carry a length of rope to use in case of an emergency.

It also doesn't hurt to carry a cell phone, GPS or hand-held compass which can be employed in the event of a whiteout.

Ice fishing can be a fun outing. Being safe contributes to that.

Clippers ice third title

The Stouffville major atom Clippers sailed off with their third tournament title of the season recently with a 4-3 win over Ajax in the final of the Ajax Christmas tournament.



The Clippers opened the tournament with a 2-1 win over Whitby before suffering a 6-2 loss to the host club. But the

Clippers rallied with a 10-1 win over Oshawa to reach the final.

Scoring for the Clippers were: Curtis Watson seven goals, Mikhael Metauro four, Luke Mabley and Brandon Jupp two, Ben Sampson and Kyle Miller, one each.

Midget Waxers take title

The Markham Definney Chiropractic-Taylor and Webb-Coverall Computer-TD Waterhouse-TD Financial Group-Unimark Automotive Leasing-Laidlaw Transportation-Select Auto-Body-D and R Contracting midget AA Waxers captured the recent 22nd annual Vic Teal Hockey Tournament in St. Catharines with a 3-2 overtime win over Ajax in the title tilt.



The Waxers reached the final after defeating Burlington 2-1, Pickering 3-1, Hillcrest 2-0 and Ancaster 2-0. The club's lone loss was a 2-0 decision to Hillcrest in a qualifier.

Scoring for the Waxers were: Travis O'Rourke three goals, Paul Lusky two goals, two assists, Jason Power, Drew Webb, Dan Definney and Andrew Regan one goal, one assist, Chris Federchuk, Garrett McCrea and Chris McGinnes, one goal, Dan Millett two assists, Calen Gauley, Rob Hope, Graham Edward and J.P. Giliberto one assist, Graham Jeffery

Waxers impressive so far in new year

The Markham Waxers rang in the new millennium with a pair of firsts: victories over the Aurora Tigers and Newmarket Hurricanes.

Backed by a two-goal effort from Kevin Tompkins, which included a power play and shorthanded marker, the Waxers defeated the Tigers 6-2 in Aurora Sunday.

Hosting the Hurricanes on Tuesday, the Waxers received a shorthanded goal from Tom Kotsopoulos and power-play tallies from Greg Chambers and Tompkins en route to a 3-1 win.

"It sure was nice," said Waxers' head coach Russ Herrington of the two wins, which improved the club's Provincial Junior A Hockey League southern conference record to 15-15-3-3.

Herrington said the extended furlough during the Christmas break did not hurt.

The bottom line though, was the way in which the team performed. Herrington sensed the club realized they must buy into what the coaching staff has been preaching all season long. That involves adhering to a couple of systems involving defensive zone coverage, transition play, forechecking and puck control.

"The guys are playing the gameplan almost to perfection and they're seeing the dividends of it. Once you beat good teams they start to say 'let's stick to our guns,'" Herrington said.

Another factor which might have lit a spark with the club was a recent deal which sent forward David Colucci to the Vaughan Vipers in exchange for 18-year-old defenceman Brent Pollock and 16-year-old centreman Jason Fraccaro. Pollock is in his second year in the

league while Fraccaro is a rookie.

"We're definitely happy with the deal," said Herrington. "Jason (Fraccaro) had a goal and an assist in the win over Aurora and Brent (Pollock) gives us another physical presence. He's good at clearing in front of the net. He plays within himself."

In addition to Tompkins' two goals against the Tigers, Joel Kitchen, Ryan Steane (with his first as a member of the Waxers), Fraccaro and Greg Chambers added singles.

The Waxers will have their work cut out for them in their next two outings as they play in Newmarket tonight then host the Vipers 8 p.m. Friday.

Spirited comeback pays dividends

The Spirit of Stouffville did something on Monday they had not done all season long.

And that was to pick up a win after overcoming a deficit.

The Spirit accomplished that feat in Thornhill with a 4-3 overtime decision over the Rattlers.

Trailing 2-0 after one period and 3-0 just 24 seconds into the second, the Spirit staged their comeback with unanswered goals by Mike Fiume and Jamie Minchella to trim their deficit to 3-2 after 40 minutes.

A goal by Daniel Speer in the third period forced overtime.

From there, J.D. Smithson potted the overtime winner with 48 seconds left in the period when he banged in a rebound.

Sporting a 19-16-2-0 northern conference mark, the Spirit return to action tonight when they host the Parry Sound Shamrocks at the rec centre at 7:30 p.m.

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- Do Not Bundle With Wire
- Remove All Decorations
- Do Not Put In A Plastic Bag

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