

Take extreme caution when venturing on frozen ponds

The early arrival of Old Man Winter can easily wet the ardent angler's appetite in getting the ice fishing tackle and ice auger out of storage in anticipation for an early start to a season on frozen pond.



Mike Hayakawa

But at the same time, Old Man Winter can also be a teaser.

By journeying on a frozen body of water early in the season, extra caution is required.

After all, you don't know if a lake's surface has solidified enough to the point where you can safely go out.

To prevent any dangerous mishaps from occurring, there are several precautionary steps that can be taken.

The easiest of which is to place an advanced telephone call to any tackle shop or local guide that might in your planned destination.

Any negative response can save what usually amounts to plenty of physical wear and tear in making a lengthy drive and these days, and money, in terms of the price of gasoline.

If no such information is at your disposal, the Lifesaving Society notes any unnecessary risks can be minimized by evaluating the quality of ice or type of ice that you might set foot on.

The only recommended ice to

travel on is clear hard, new ice.

And for an individual to walk safely in single file on a frozen surface, at least four inches of clear, solid ice is required.

Anglers utilizing all-terrain vehicles and snowmobiles should be on ice with at least six inches of thickness.

For cars and small pick up vehicles, eight to 12 inches is considered safe. And for medium-sized trucks, 12 to 15 inches of clear, hard ice is advised.

Avoid slushy ice or ice on or near moving water such as rivers or currents. Ice that has thawed and refrozen should also be considered dangerous along with layered or rotten ice caused by sudden temperature changes.

Be leery of any snow that blankets an ice surface as it acts as a blanket to prevent the hardening of ice.

As well, pay attention to areas with underwater springs, reefs or shoals and near bridges.

It also helps to pay close attention to the weather forecast as strong offshore winds can take ice sheets with it, stranding anglers over deep water.

When travelling on ice, one should take a familiar path and do so during daylight hours. If you have to go alone, inform someone of your destination and time of return.

During any expedition, it's also wise to dress appropriately.

Part of your outer apparel should include a survival suit that is CSA approved, which will increase your chances of survival if you go through the ice. If you do not have one, the Lifesaving Society suggests wearing a life-jacket or personal floatation device over an ordinary snowmobile suit or layered winter clothing.

It's also a good idea to bring along a small personal safety kit, which could include a lighter, waterproof matches, magnesium fire starter, pocketknife, compass and whistle.

Ice picks, an ice staff, a length of rope and cellular telephone should also be a part of one's emergency essentials to bring along.

Cordina rocks on

BY MIKE HAYAKAWA
Sports Editor

For Sheri Cordina, this season in her competitive curling career is one that she won't likely forget.

Just recently, the 25-year-old Markham resident was the lead of a ladies foursome skipped by Sherry Middaugh that won the final event of the JVC Women's Tour of Curling in Regina and pocketed \$14,000.

In winning the tour finale, the Coldwater Curling Club entry staked its claim to the overall title in the JVC Women's Tour of Curling.

If that wasn't enough, the first-year entry, which includes vice Janet Brown of Keswick and second Andrea Lawes of Whitby, took a big step towards competing in the 2002 Winter Olympics by gaining one of 10 berths that are up for grabs in the 2001 Canadian Olympic curling trials in Regina.

"It's definitely the highlight so far," said Cordina, who has been curling for the last 13 years. "While I haven't been to a national yet the Olympic trials happen only once every four years. To have an opportunity to go to the Olympics it's outstanding."

Assembling their rink in February, Cordina was confident the newly-formed entry could be a presence after working on team dynamics throughout the summer months and then taking to the ice for the first time in the fall.

"We all knew each other from the circuit. It's a big world, but a small world too," said Cordina, an employee of the Seneca College athletic department. "Sherry (Middaugh) and Janet (Brown) were talking about forming a team and they wanted an experienced front end. I've played with Andrea



SHERI CORDINA: Markham resident enjoying a successful year on competitive curling circuit.

(Lawes) for the last three years and Andrea won the Canadian Scott Tournament of Hearts in 1990 when she was curling with Alison Goring's rink.

Cordina cited a large part of their success stems from their ability to perform on a consistent level. In the JVC tour, Middaugh's rink took to the pebbled ice surface in eight events and brought home cash in seven outings.

With a berth in the Olympic trials secured, the rink is currently in the process of attaining its other target of representing the province in the prestigious Scott Tournament of Hearts.

After winning their zone, the rink suffered a setback at the recent provincial playdowns.

The rink still has a second life when it goes to Ilderton from Jan. 19-21 to compete in a regional Challenge Round. The winner advance to the provincials the following week.

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