

WEATHER: More golf than snow in November

Get ready for cold, dry winter, Stouffville

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You may be able to hold off on getting a new snowblower or shovel, but you might want to invest in thermal wear.

This winter could bring about less snow, but colder temperatures compared to the past two years, Aurora resident and Environment Canada senior climatologist David Phillips said.

In the last two winters, we've been inundated with snow, snow and more snow.

"By this time last year, we were already swearing at winter," Mr. Phillips said. "It was snow tires and frozen pipes by now."

"There was snow before Halloween."

It has been so far, so good, this year, though.

HIGHER TEMPERATURES

There was only one day with snowfall in November, compared to 20 before Dec. 1 last year.

The last two times there was only a trace of snow in November, in 2001 and 2006, there was 68 centimetres and 65 cm of snow between December and February, respectively.

Last year, we had 38 cm before December.

Not only has there been little snow, temperatures have been above normal so far. November was 2.5C warmer than the 3C normal.

Last November was 0.7C cooler than normal.

The balmy temperatures mean many area golf courses have extended the season.

Last year, St. Andrew's Valley Golf Club in Aurora closed Nov. 14, but bookings continue to come in daily, director of golf Rob Pearce said.

"It's still very busy," Mr. Pearce said.

Cardinal Golf Club, which has 72 holes open during the regular season, still has 18 open. Last year, Cardinal closed all its courses Nov. 17, but there have been years when the flags were still in as late as Dec. 19, director of golf Rob Brandon said.

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David Phillips,
Environment Canada senior climatologist

"We try to stay open as long as we can," Mr. Brandon said. "But once the snow hits, we're done."

Yesterday, 15 groups were booked.

The late start to winter is nice, but does it mean we should prepare for a nasty end?

"Pay for it now and enjoy it later or vice-versa is a myth," Mr. Phillips said. "The weather doesn't work that way or we would have had it all figured out by now."

This winter season is an El Nino season, where a warm system of Pacific Ocean air rolls through. The western warm weather could reach as far as southern Ontario, including the stretch from Windsor to York Region to Ottawa, Mr. Phillips said.

Other El Nino years include the 2006/2007 and 2004/05 seasons.

The normal winter temperature is -4.7C and the average amount of snow between December and February is 101 cm.

HAVANA DREAMS

The last El Nino season, 2006/07, was a weak to moderate system, where the temperature was 1C warmer than normal and there was only 65 cm of snow.

This year could mirror the 2004/2005 El Nino season, which was a weak system, Mr. Phillips said.

"It could be colder than normal, but with less snow," Mr. Phillips said. "There could be less pushing and plowing this year, but there will be days you wished you were in Honolulu or Havana. That's the personality or character of the winter."

AVERAGE SNOWFALL

Average winter snowfall since 1986 in central York Region: 141.8 cm	• November: 12 cm	• March 21 cm
	• December 32.8 cm	• April 7.1 cm
	• January 38 cm	• May 0.1 cm
	• February 30.2	

Source: Environment Canada

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