



Outdoor Ice Oval Society of Prince George

Report on 2022/2023 Operating Year

By Kathy Lewis, President

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The Outdoor Ice Oval opened for the 2022/2023 season on Nov. 19, 2022. The Oval closed and reopened 5 times during the season due to warm temperatures affecting ice conditions. On Jan. 25th cracks developed in the ice and despite 237 volunteer hours attempting to repair the cracks, the oval remained closed for the rest of the season despite some good temperatures. The oval was open for only 46 days during the period between Nov. 19 and Jan. 25. Despite the extreme weather challenges, we had 7323 skater visits, for 159 skaters per day. The weather was particularly challenging this season due to warm temperatures, and the development of cracks in the ice that despite heroic efforts from the ice maintenance crew, could not be repaired, resulting in early closure of the oval.

Operation

The operation of the Oval was based on the same model as previous years, and was entirely volunteer-driven, with an honour-based user-pay system. Volunteer person-hours are shown in Table 1. We had approximately 15 volunteer ice-makers, 2 equipment maintainers, and 6 executive members. Table 1 shows the number of volunteer hours by activity. Total volunteer hours approximately 1550.

Table 1. Volunteer hours

Year	Equipment mntnce ¹	Making ice ²	Maintaining ice ³	Administration ⁴	Skate Rental ⁵	Facility Improvements ⁶	Other ⁷
16/17	25	180	450	140	50	500	10
17/18	25	162	688	280	157	500	6
18/19	36	250	650	220	194	400	
19/20	16	167.5	798	250	198	228	
20/21	64.5	226.5	566.5	200	0	144	
21/22	54	195	570	230	0	>500	
2/23	42	254.5	941.5	200	75	150	

1. Moving equipment, regular maintenance, putting equipment away for the season
2. Initial flooding and some conditioning to get the ice to skating condition
3. Snow removal, in-season flooding, and conditioning
4. Preparation of agreements with the City, collection of fees, banking and book-keeping, website updates, responding to emails and requests by user groups, support for special events, issuing memberships
5. Fitting skates, completing paper work, skate maintenance
6. Work done over the season and the summer on building improvements and completion, and other improvements to the facility. 2021/22 included completion of the wheelchair access to the ice and Canfor house – all done by volunteer labour.
7. Picking up garbage, snow-clearing stairs and walkways, etc.

As usual we received tremendous support from City of Prince George and its staff, including parking lot and hydrant maintenance. An operating plan was jointly developed and agreed upon by the OIO Society and the City. The oval was open from approximately 10am to 8:30pm, 7 days a week and was unmonitored. User fees were \$2.00 per person or \$5.00 per family and collection of the fee was on the

honour system that utilized the on-site, secure, drop-box, cleared daily. We also sold season passes to families (\$60 per family) and individuals (\$25 per person).

We were able to open the Canfor House this year for use by skaters as a change and warmup facility.

Outdoor Ice Oval equipment and ownership are listed in Table 2.

Table 2. Outdoor Ice Oval equipment

Equipment	Purpose	Ownership
1983, water truck	Ice making	OIO Society
1994, Bobcat – blade, bucket, snow thrower	Snow clearing	OIO society
1998, Bobcat – brush	Brooming	OIO society
Zamboni	Conditioning	OIO Society
Snowblower	Clearing snow from walkways	OIO Society

Attendance

The on-site counter registered 7323 skaters during the season.

The PGBSSC had one night per week restricted access for speed skating practice. Attendance at these sessions was approximately 10 PGBSSC skaters, plus up to 30 long blade skaters who accessed the ice after the club practice. Saturday and Sunday mornings were reserved for long blade skaters as well and once we had appropriate signage in place, this time was respected by the general public.

Table 3 shows the attendance for the 2022/2023 season compared to past years.

Table 3. Attendance numbers by year

Year	Number of skate visitors	Days open	Skaters/day
2009-2010	6300	70	90
2010-2011	7471	97	77
2011-2012	8290	74	112
2012-2013	8320	66	126
2013-2014	5688	66 (16 days below – 20 C)	86
2014-2015	Not kept due to CWG		
2015-2016	8338	55	153
2016-2017	10168	73	139
2017-2018	15,802	99	160
2018-2019	12,525	73 (13 days below – 20)	172
2019-2020	14,525	82	177
2020-2021	14,855	54	275

2021-2022	10,980	51 (8 days below -20)	215
2022-2023	7323	46	159

Improvements to Facility during off season

- We applied for a grant with the BC Destination Development Fund for a building that could hold some of our accessories for the bobcats, and which could be converted to a change room for hosting events. We made it to stage 2 but were not successful in the end.
- We applied for a grant with Northern Development Initiatives Trust for a new water truck and were successful in that application! Purchase and outfitting of the truck is ongoing.
- Weed control and rolling of the track surface, painting, and general clean up.
- Installation of a “curb” to facilitate access from equipment building to the ice for skaters.

Website and Social Media

We are working on improving e-commerce for season pass and skate rental purchases. We had to change our email address which is now outdoorovalpg@gmail.com

Instagram - 995 followers - more businesses and media requests come through this route

Facebook - 1013 followers

Canadian Tire sponsored commercials – we applied for an opportunity with CKPG sponsored by Canadian Tire, and were successful. The oval will be featured in a series of commercials starting December.

Refrigeration

Fundraising to date has raised approximately \$75,000.

Plans for next season

1. Refresh our policies and manuals
2. Continue to work on fundraising – for refrigeration
3. Improve training opportunities for new volunteers
4. Outfit the new water truck in time for the 23-24 season