**Ice allocation and scheduling**

The Surrey White Rock Ringette (SWRR) Association works with the City of Surrey and City of White Rock for subsidized ice in both municipalities.

**What is the ice used for?**

1. Team practices
2. Lower Mainland Ringette league (LMRL) games
3. SWRR Santa skate
4. AA program - each Association is required to provide one ice time for each LMRL AA team. AA is the highest level of amateur Ringette in Canada and each league within the Province (LMRL, Thompson Okanagan Ringette league (TORL), Northern Ringette league (NRL) and the Island) can form a league AA team in U14, U16 and U19. As LMRL generally has an AA team in each of those divisions, SWRR is required to provide three hours of ice for the season to AA.
5. The BC Winter games are held bi-annually (in 2016 it is hosted by Penticton). Ringette is one of the participating sports. SWRR is in Zone 4 with Port Coquitlam, Coquitlam and Burnaby/New Westminster. Ice time is required from each Association in the zone (likely 3 – 5 hours of ice each), for evaluations and practices.
6. BC Ringette Association (BCRA) is responsible for arranging both coaching certification and referee clinics. If ice is required for either event, they will seek ice from any Association.

**How is ice allocated?**

The City of Surrey holds four to six meetings per year and City of White Rock one per year with their user groups. Our ice allocations director attends these meetings to discuss apportionment of ice, individual user group needs and requirements. These meetings can be intense, as everyone wants more ice and better locations for their own user group.

The City of Surrey uses a formula of one practice and ½ game ice per week for each house team. The number of teams is based on the previous year’s registration. Most user groups receive less than required ice and have to purchase private ice. SWRR registration numbers have fluctuated over the past ten years but fortunately not enough to either lose or gain ice. With the current lack of ice facilities, even if our registration numbers increased significantly, there is no regularly scheduled, subsidized ice to gain.

The city ice facilitators’ primary goal is to fully utilize the current facilities, which leaves less desirable ice to be distributed to all user groups. City of Surrey ice contracts generally have two weekday ice times prior to the start of school some as early as 5:15 am.  Weekend ice times start at 5:30 a.m.   All of this early ice is allocated to the four minor hockey groups; Semiahmoo, Surrey, Cloverdale and Surrey Female Hockey. SWRR has one 6:00am practice at Centennial on Sundays.

The executive often get complaints about the 6:00am Sunday practice, but we are required to take that ice time as part of our ice allocation contract with White Rock. Ice usage is monitored, and user groups failing to utilize assigned ice jeopardize their contracts with the cities. For that reason it is imperative that teams properly use any assigned ice regardless of the desire to sleep in on Sundays.

In addition to normal ice requirements, a user group may have an annual or one off tournament or competition which additional ice is required for. The City attempts to accommodate these requests and in doing so may cancel ice from one user group to give to another. Unfortunately, replacement ice is not provided in return.

The ice cancellation policy varies between Surrey and White Rock. Surrey will accept a cancellation request provided at least seven-calendar day notice. White Rock will not allow or buy back ice once the contract is signed off. Ice contracts are generally completed and signed off well before the Ringette season starts and always before annual tournament dates are confirmed. As a result the ice times at the Centennial rink are divided amongst those teams not attending the tournament weekend or the league may have scheduled games as they have no idea, which teams may be playing in which tournament.

**How does SWRR utilize the ice?**

We are committed to providing each division with one practice ice per week, in most situations that ice is shared. As we do not have enough ice suitable for the younger players, late evening ice is given to the older players and sometimes not shared. Any extra ice is assigned on a rotational basis. The Association attempts to follow a consistent schedule for each division from year to year but with some divisions having multiple teams some judging is necessary.

Designated game ice is:

* 8:30 am – Saturday at Surrey Sport and Leisure
* 4:30 pm – Saturday at Centennial
* 5:45 pm – Saturday at Centennial
* 12:30 pm – Sunday at North Surrey
* 1:45 pm – Sunday at North Surrey
* Additionally some of our practice ice during the week is required to accommodate a game.

SWRR attempts to hold back the Saturday 8:30 am ice but is often contacted by the league to open it up for games.

Occasionally scheduled games are cancelled and if there is enough notice, the ice scheduler will revise the ice schedule in order to utilize the ice and allow another team extra ice. To minimize scheduling concerns, a member of the executive will double check the monthly ice schedule prior to distribution.

**Why doesn’t SWRR buy extra ice?**

SWRR has a small membership in comparison to hockey and without an increase in registration fees, we do not have the budget to buy non-subsidized or private ice. SWRR prepares the annual budget in advance of the year-end Annual General Meeting, there is no monies available to buy extra ice unless it is budgeted for. Subsidized ice average cost is $150 per hour and prime non-subsidized or private ice is usually twice that.

There is a sliding registration fee schedule based on age and when a player registers. Some of the reasons for the lower cost for the younger age group is because there are less league games scheduled for them as in the case of U7 (not until Jan). If the mandate given to the executive was to provide more weekly practices, a motion could be made at an AGM to increase registration fees in order that private ice could be pursued. Additionally, any parent can register their child into a CanSkate or power skating program offered by the City to assist with their skating skill development.

The City of Surrey provides the user groups with a list of available ice on a monthly basis; most of the ice is either before 4:00pm or after 8:00pm. SWRR occasionally obtains some of this ice to meet our requirements to AA or BCWG.

There are currently no new rinks under construction by Surrey. The City of Surrey is looking for a private partner in order to build a facility near the Scott Road Skytrain station; the plan would be three rinks of which two would be available for user groups. Once that project is completed the North Surrey arena complex would be taken down and the property re-utilized.

I hope this has been helpful in understanding the current and future challenges SWRR and all other user groups face in Surrey and White Rock.

Any questions? Let me know

Bob Saito