

# You can build an ice rink everywhere

## Chapter 1

### 1.1 Introduction of the Manual/ IIHF Prototype

A covered ice rink is not an impossible dream. How can it be? After all, there are over 2700 rinks in Canada alone! There are rinks in countries and cities, which never have had snow or ice.

This manual from the International Ice Hockey Federation intends to show that building an ice rink is possible anywhere in the world. The basic element is enthusiasm and some entrepreneurship.

We want to target ice hockey clubs and leisure organisations that have the ambition to take their program to another level and show them how to successfully construct, manage and operate an ice rink. This manual also targets the decision makers, politicians in the communities and



*You can have an ice sheet in the desert in the United Arab Emirates or, as on this picture, in sunny California.*



*Prototype of an IIHF rink*

municipalities and presents them with ideas how to make building an ice rink financially feasible.

The local rink is far from only being a place where you practise and play ice hockey. Special social patterns can develop within the confines of an ice rink, and there are many “rink rats” who have spent long hours at the rink without ever lacing a pair of skates. Parents who assist their children, volunteers who sell hot dogs during a weekend junior tournament or take a shift driving the ice resurfacer.

By building an ice rink, more than just the game of ice hockey prospers. In many communities, the ice rink has become the centre of social life where many other activities can be performed. An ice rink can also be used for figure skating, fairs, exhibitions, minor conventions and coaching clinics. By covering the ice sheet during off-season the arena can be utilized for other indoor sports such as basketball, indoor soccer, handball and inline hockey.

There are several examples where an ice rink has served as a boost for a whole community. This manual wants to be the inspiration to start looking and finding ways and solutions in order to build a community rink.

In this manual we will introduce a prototype that is not the cheapest possible solution to build a small ice rink. The prototype is a product of a marketing approach. It is a concept that offers modern comfort to visitors, both active and passive, through modern ice rink construction techniques. The rink should be an appealing place to all potential visitors. It should be safe, comfortable and give visitors the opportunity to enjoy their stay, whether it’s on the ice, in the small but comfortable restaurant, in the stands or in the dressing room. The rink should also be easy to maintain, with low overhead and investment costs.

The writers of this manual feel that the prototype reflects all these wishes. The aesthetic design is the icing on the cake. We hope that you will be as fascinated as we are about the concept.

### 1.2 Introduction to ice hockey

Ice hockey is a product of evolution stemming from existing sports, coupled with geographical and cultural parameters. Further, it is a team sport enjoyed by millions of players worldwide and viewed by millions more. It has been proclaimed the “fastest team sport in the world”

and the object of the game, simply stated, is to score more goals than your opponent does. The fact that each team uses six players, including the goaltender showcases individual skill within a team concept, which ultimately provides a dynamic sport experience that is unique from game to game.

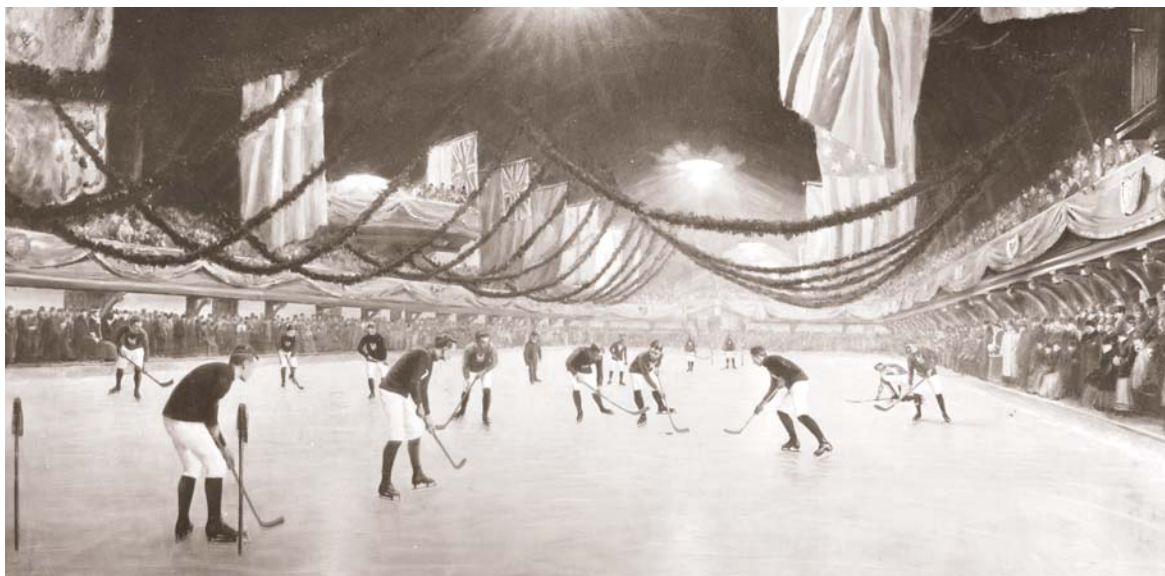
While the exact origins of the game can be debated, it is generally accepted that ice hockey as is played today, took shape on Canada's East Coast between the mid to late 1800's. A form of bandy or "Hurley on ice" became logical for the settlers to this new land when confronted with the harsh winter conditions. Over time, local rules were implemented and equipment, particularly skates and the stick, were manufactured specifically for ice hockey. As popularity for the game increased over time, the sport began to be exported to other countries, especially as travel itself became easier. Many refinements regarding rules and equipment were instituted around the turn of the century but modifications still continue today as ongoing efforts to improve the game both on and off the ice persist.

The first recorded indoor ice hockey game took place at Victoria Skating Rink in Montreal way back in 1875. From those modest beginnings, the game has transformed into a major modern indoor sport. The impact of enclosed arenas to the game is hard to overestimate. Technology has

recently afforded the sport of ice hockey substantial opportunities to expand globally. No longer a function of climate, current facility construction allows ice hockey and skating in general to now be accommodated virtually anywhere in the world.

It might be significant to note that it has been historically documented that a contained covered rink contributed to a common community spirit. This social type of gathering still plays an important part of today's society, enabling people with similar interests to get together and cheer on their local ice hockey teams for the purposes of entertainment and civic pride. From an industry perspective, an indoor arena provides a greater potential to generate revenue because games can be played year round, regardless of the weather. Further, top class events can be planned with certainty, providing a guarantee of sorts to sponsors, spectators and even media, including television.

With this in mind, it is not surprising that the appeal of the game goes far beyond just the participants. Ice hockey is an extremely popular spectator sport, whether it is viewed in person or via a television broadcast. Either way both men and women of all ages enjoy the fast paced action that is witnessed during a typical ice hockey match. Aside from the general traits required to excel at this sport, such as endurance, strength, balance and good hand-eye coordination, players show-



*The Victoria Skating Rink in Montreal, Canada. The site of the first ever hockey game, March 3, 1875.*

case a variety of skills specific to the game itself. This includes not only the ability to skate within the context of the contact sport that hockey is, but also to be able to stickhandle and shoot the puck while in motion.

Because of the mass appeal, the game lends itself to be marketable from a number of perspectives. Corporations frequently benefit from their association with this dynamic sport and can brand its product or service via the game. The demographics of ice hockey, despite variations from country to country, reveal that most arena patrons are aware of advertising within the building, and typically have a higher than average income. When mixed with an exciting product on the ice, all parties stand to benefit.

Today, corporations go beyond the traditional static advertising as has been evident within the rink and on the equipment of the players themselves. In a sense they exhibit a form of

vertical integration, actually taking ownership of the building and/or sport franchise in efforts to generate a greater awareness of the company and ultimately additional revenues. Similarly, in North America, a trend has started with professional ice hockey teams building skating facilities locally as a way to develop and nurture a grass-roots core of players who become spectators and purchasers of team merchandise. By entering the rink ownership and operation business, the team and any associated partners strive for long-term growth in their local market.

Therefore, where traditionally a skating facility was viewed primarily as part of the community's infrastructure, not unlike a park or a library, today's arena projects are examined in economic terms with revenue and expense implications. Naming rights, private boxes, concession, along with innovative advertising opportunities are just a few examples.



*Modern professional ice hockey is played in 10 000 plus arenas. The action is fast-paced and the competition fierce. Here, Canada plays Russia in the IIHF World Championship.*