

Puddles or not, 11th annual pond hockey tournament skates on

By Libby James
North Forty News

A warm spell during the first week-end in February caused a few changes in the schedule for the 11th annual Fort Collins Pond Hockey Tournament held at Beaver Meadows Resort Ranch in Red Feather Lakes, but it didn't dampen anyone's enthusiasm.

The event drew 24 teams of five for the three-day event. The tournament went international for the first time this year, hosting a team from Mexico as well as several players from across the U.S. A 70-year-old dad came from Massachusetts to play. The tournament is for men and women, 18 and over, but women are in the minority.

Friday afternoon games were canceled due to melting ice which meant that teams had to double up and play three games on Saturday. Each team plays a total of four games prior to the finals which were held on Sunday. Saturday games began at 7 a.m. and quit by noon in order to take advantage of the coldest part of the day.

Teams were slotted into three divisions according to their performances. The top eight teams competed for the Beaver Cup, and for the 10th year in a row, Beaver Liquors powered their way to a top finish, beating the Can Ams, 6-5. This team had a reputation to uphold, having won the tournament every time they've played in it. They did



The Rubber Puckies competed in the Fort Collins Pond Hockey Tournament held at Beaver Meadows Resort Ranch.

not compete in the inaugural event.

Molenaar Boot, the middle division, saw the Rubber Puckies besting the Pale Alers. The third division, the FCPHL Champs (also known as The Pond Scum), saw Mitch's Bitches succumb to Safety Third.

Play was completed in the early afternoon as the weather continued to warm, reaching into the 50s and causing puddles and mud in the area.

The Fort Collins Pond Hockey League has been in existence since 1992, shortly after founder Dave Beichley discovered a scraped oval of ice on Prospect Ponds and got some friends together to play broomball on it. "None of us knew how to skate," he explained.

Soon they bought skates, learned the game and have been hooked ever since. FCPHL has participated in local, regional and state pond hockey events.

Today the organization boasts

182 members and has become an official non-profit organization dedicated to building community by bringing together people from different backgrounds to enjoy outdoor recreation.

There is no cost to be part of the organization. However, "if you skate, you shovel," Beichley says, explaining that players do all the maintenance of the outdoor rinks and take their turns refereeing, shoveling and keeping the ice in top playing condition.

Kids of any age are encouraged to join in the fun. "My grandson is 2 and next season he'll be on skates," Beichley said.

The organization makes it possible for underprivileged kids to learn and enjoy the game and also supports players and their families in need during troubled times. They raise funds through hockey and golf tournaments to support their charitable efforts.

Business F



Gilsdorf Garage offers 28-point inspection

The approach of spring means it's time to get your car checked out — you never know what those ice-rutted, winter-road hazards may have jarred loose.

Leading up to National Car Care month in April, Gilsdorf Garage Service Manager Brandon Pursley wants to remind everyone to schedule a spring service this month to receive a complimentary 28-point inspection (with purchase of any of three oil change services).

Periodic inspections by ASE certified master technicians can spot problems before they cause breakdowns and expensive repairs.

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