

Line greets opening of C.R. indoor rink

By Kristophere' Owens

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CEDAR RAPIDS — After a day's delay, ice skaters got their first crack at the new Olympic-size public rink at the Cedar Rapids Ice Arena on Saturday.

A crowd of eager ice skaters lined the walls around the rink about noon as an ice-smoothing machine put the finishing touches on the ice.

Skaters were allowed onto the ice at 12:45 p.m., about 45 minutes later than planned. By the

■ Photo, 1A

end of the inaugural three-hour session, 150 people had paid their admission for an afternoon of skating.

"We needed this a long time ago," said Mike Greenland of Minneapolis, a Cedar Rapids native in town visiting family.

The public rink had been scheduled to open Friday, but was not ready. It is a companion rink to the 4,000-seat hockey arena used by the RoughRiders, a United States Hockey League team, in the \$12.7 million facility at 1100 Rockford Rd. SW.

There is still work to complete, said Jim Wynkoop, general manager of Polar Ice, the private company operating the arena.

As skaters circled the ice, workers painted, cleaned and did other jobs around the arena.

Wynkoop expects the facility to be 100 percent finished by early to mid-February.

Guy Ayers-Berry of Hiawatha said the new indoor rink beats driving to Coralville to skate at Coral Ridge Mall.

It also gives skaters another option to the outdoor rink at Ellis Park, said Karen Yorgensen of Cedar Rapids. She usually takes her daughter, Samantha, there, but they decided to try the new rink Saturday. The indoor conditions were different, Yorgensen observed. "She's used to pond ice. It's a little slippery (here)."

Public skating hours today are from 12:30 to 3:30 p.m. and 5 to 8 p.m. General admission is \$5.50 per session; \$5 for children under 12, senior citizens or people in the military; and free for children under age 3. Skate rental is \$2.50.

For information, contact Polar Ice at 398-0100.