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LISA RAINFORD | Jan 27, 2012 - 10:18 AM | 0 | [Report a Typo or Correction](#)

Women's shinny tournament takes to outdoor rinks

When Deirdre Norman began playing shinny with her husband and son eight years ago, she noticed "a huge discrepancy" between men and women's ice time.

That was the catalyst for The Women of Winter Outdoor Shinny Tournament in Dufferin Grove Park, which Norman founded in collaboration with Toronto parks and recreation.

"I thought we should have a celebration on our outdoor rink," said Norman.

Part of the city's parks and rec programming, this year's tournament takes place over the Feb. 3 weekend. The city provides the ice and facilities and The Women of Winter, led by Norman, run the tournament which has been gaining momentum since its inception seven years ago.

"Shinny has really taken off," remarked Norman. "We have more ice time allotted just for women. We play a style of game that's different."

Shinny is an informal form of ice hockey, typically played by children on the street or on ice, often with a ball or other object in place of a puck. There are no formal rules or specific positions and generally no goaltenders.

Open shinny at outdoor rinks is primarily played by young men whose skill level is better than the middle-aged women, who started playing at 40, said Norman.

"There's a huge number of women who didn't start 'til they were older," she said. "We develop a personality in our game. I think that's what I love about outdoor rinks. Every one has its own personality."

The annual tournament has the same women coming back every year.

This year's event will be comprised of six teams of eight from all across Toronto. Norman herself has been "a west-end girl" since she came to Toronto about 30 years ago. She said she tries to take advantage of as many rinks as possible. Shinny is a great way to break into the hockey world, said Norman.

Tournaments run rain or shine, she said, admitting that this year's weather has been tough on outdoor rinks. The rain softens the ice. However, one year the group saw themselves shoveling two inches of snow off the rink while another saw the ice surface covered in two inches of water.

"One woman showed up wearing water wings," recalled Norman.

This year's tournament has already reached capacity. It usually fills up within a week of registration. The Women of Winter play every Tuesday at 9 p.m. Norman encourages all women to take advantage of all outdoor ice rinks in the city.

"Skating on outdoor ice is a very unique and wonderful experience," she said. "We're very lucky in Toronto to have these rinks where we can go to skate for free."

The tournament takes place Friday, Feb. 3 from 7 to 10 p.m. and Saturday, Feb. 4 from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Visit www.womenofwinter.com for further details.

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