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## Hot times on backyard ice rink

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TOLEDO - As far as the Mauder males and their hockey-playing friends are concerned, the colder the temperatures, the better.

This winter has been especially good for time on the ice, they say, even as most people stay huddled inside.

For eight years, Troy Mauder has built an increasingly sophisticated backyard ice rink for his two sons

to practice on, as well as for friends, relatives, and other neighborhood children to use. Hockey nets

with backstops, portable lights, and music complement the ice, which has geothermal pipes

underneath to help pull heat from the water so it freezes faster.

The 100-foot-by-40-foot ice sheet - which is less than a quarter the size of a hockey rink - is

frequently dominated by local hockey team players, including Mauder's elder son, Mitchell, who

worked up a sweat this week despite the chilly weather.

"It's a blast because you get extra ice time, and it helps you," said Mitchell,

Troy Mauder even devised a hand-pushed device with squeegees, broken shovel handles, and PVC

pipng so he can spray water on the ice and resurface it every night, sort of a common man's

Zamboni.

"It's really hard to get good ice, to get it smooth," said Mauder, owner of Mauder Heating & Air

Conditioning, which he runs from his home.

"This year has been great," he added. "It's not uncommon for kids to get dropped off at 4 o'clock, 5

o'clock, and on the weekends, we have to ask them to leave at 11 o'clock at night."

Mauder said his younger son, Dylan, a sixth-grader who plays defense for the Sylvania Stars hockey

team, is probably 10 times better this year than last because he has been practicing with high schoolers.

His wife, Brenda Mauder, stays inside, ready to supply hot chocolate and hot dogs as needed, and

a high school freshman who plays on a club team.

"I love all my Dad does for us - it's a great thing and a lot of fun," he added.

skaters use a heated garage to get in and out of their gear.

Tam-O-Shanter in Sylvania is the nearest hockey rink, making the backyard rink even more valuable

for practice time, said Tony Horvath, a sophomore who plays goalie.

"I come out here a lot," Tony said. "It's fun hanging out with my friends and playing hockey."

Using wood left as scrap from the construction of their house 10 years ago, Mauder rebuilds the rink

every winter, although recently his sons have chipped in on the manual labor. Plastic goes on top of

the wood frame, followed by water ranging from six inches to 18 inches deep in the uneven yard.

The biggest annual expense is the plastic, which can't be reused and costs about \$250, Mauder said.

The geothermal system installed last winter cost a few thousand dollars, but it is being used to heat his shop building, he said.

"It's a ton of work - every year, I tell myself that I'm not doing it," Mauder said. "(But) to sit in the dining

room and watch the kids playing for hours, it's worth it."

