

## Hockey training facility opens in Stillwater

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Hockey teams from the Stillwater area will travel to all corners of the state and beyond to play games and compete in tournaments this winter.

With the opening of The Edge Performance Hockey Training near the St. Croix Valley Recreation Center, players can find the latest and greatest in hockey training opportunities in their own backyard.

The Edge, which is located at 2510 Curve Crest Blvd. - the former St. Croix Bike and Skate building - in Stillwater, opened the doors this week and is continuing its free open house through next week on Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 5-9 p.m., and on Tuesday and Thursday from 3-9 p.m. The open house is an opportunity for players and their parents to check out this unique training center.

"Our goal is to provide a great product at an affordable price for families," said Matt Doman, who along with John Funk, are trainers and part owners of the facility. "Hockey is expensive as it is, so we want to give them alternatives to practicing on the ice and really try teach them how important off-ice training is and do it at an affordable rate.

"There's something to do for every kid and we really want to create athletes. It's a hockey specific facility, but we want to develop athleticism and athletes, from the littlest buggers to the pro guys, that's our goal."

The 6,000-square foot facility, which won't begin booking and scheduling team training until Nov. 17, features a Woodway Treadmill - which allows players to use while wearing skates - shooting stations, a 20-by-40 synthetic ice area and a full gym. It also features a climbing wall, a climbing rope and Olympic rings.

"Our skating treadmill is obviously something that's going to set us apart from most people," Doman said. "In my opinion it's the best treadmill out on the market and allows you to teach proper skating technique, not just conditioning, but getting the fundamentals down as well. It's a great opportunity to train in that hockey-specific way where you're skating and getting our conditioning. We add stick handling, shooting and passing while we're doing that so we're incorporating all hockey skills to be trained at the same time and multiple repetitions."

University of Minnesota players Aaron Ness and Ryan Stoa tried out the treadmill on Tuesday evening and gave it a thumbs-up.

The facility has been a work in progress this week, but the final piece of equipment was scheduled to arrive today.

"By Monday we should have everything up and going and kind of giving us that last week where we're actually training any high school eligible player until their tryouts," Doman said.



Photos by The Picture Plac  
University of Minnesota freshman Aaron Ness checks out the Woodway Treadmill at The Edge Performance Hockey Training facility in Stillwater on Tuesday evening.

The Edge is also offering special introductory rates on packages purchased by Dec. 31.

"I think if you get into this building and you see what we have available and what we're going to do, I think it will sell itself," Doman said. "It's an impressive building, an impressive facility, and we're just excited to get people in the door and just let them see what we've got."

The driving force behind The Edge is an 11-person ownership group that includes Stillwater boys' hockey coach and NHL hall of fame defenseman Phil Housley and current Minnesota Wild assistant general manager and assistant coach for the Houston Aeros Troy Ward, among others. Tom Sagissor and current Stillwater Youth Hockey Association president Darrell Salmi are also part of the ownership group.

"We have a lot of guys that are really involved in the community and involved in hockey in the community and really trying to provide a service to the community," said Doman, who played hockey for four years and served as a captain at the University of Wisconsin. "This isn't something that we're all trying to make a million bucks on. This is an opportunity for us to give back to the game and to give back to the greater Stillwater area."

Funk also played hockey for the Badgers and more recently was a coach on the staff for 2008 Class A state champion St. Thomas Academy.

Doman (Bantam A) and Funk (Peewee A) are also coaches in the Stillwater Youth Hockey Association.

And while the facility will likely draw athletes from outside the immediate area - don't be surprised to see current NHL and college hockey players from the area working out there during the offseason - one of the goals is to make the Stillwater hockey program, in addition to the individual players, more competitive.

"Just to have a kid come back and you see the look on his face when the things you're starting to teach them and they do it on the ice and have success," Doman said will make this venture a success. "Now they see the rewards and they came back and be excited about it, that's worth a lot."

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