

ARC International puts City of Rockville on ice

by Joshua Cooley
Staff Writer

As the new ARC Ice Sports center opens its doors on East Gude Drive in Rockville, adolescent ice hockey buffs aren't the only ones giddy at the thought of a new playground.

Just ask their parents.

Rich Garmat of Rockville used to have to shuttle his son, Dan, a freshman goalie on the Wootton club team and a member of Montgomery Hockey (a local youth league), to destinations such as Frederick, Laurel, Fort Meade and even north of Baltimore because of the lack of area rinks.

Garmat figured he used to trek 200-300 miles every weekend as a hockey parent.

Now that ARC has opened?

"Five-point-six miles," Garmat said.

The center is the latest extension of ARC International Corp., a 26-year-old Toronto-based company which owns three ice hockey rinks in Canada.

The company trades on the New York Stock Exchange, and also owns Ballantyne of Omaha, Inc. (the largest manufacturer of motion picture projection equipment in the U.S.) and Cabletel Communications Corporation (the largest supplier of cable equipment through all of the cable operators in Canada).

Besides high school hockey, the center will also be used for figure skating, public skating and lessons. And according to Duncan Finch, the center's general manager, the Washington Capitals have been looking at the fa-

cility as a possible practice site.

"There isn't anything in any of those areas [Laurel, Frederick, etc.] like this," said ARC president/CEO Arnold Tenney. "You can look anywhere in all of the counties that surround this, and when you walk through this, you'll see this is a state of the art facility, state of the art equipment"

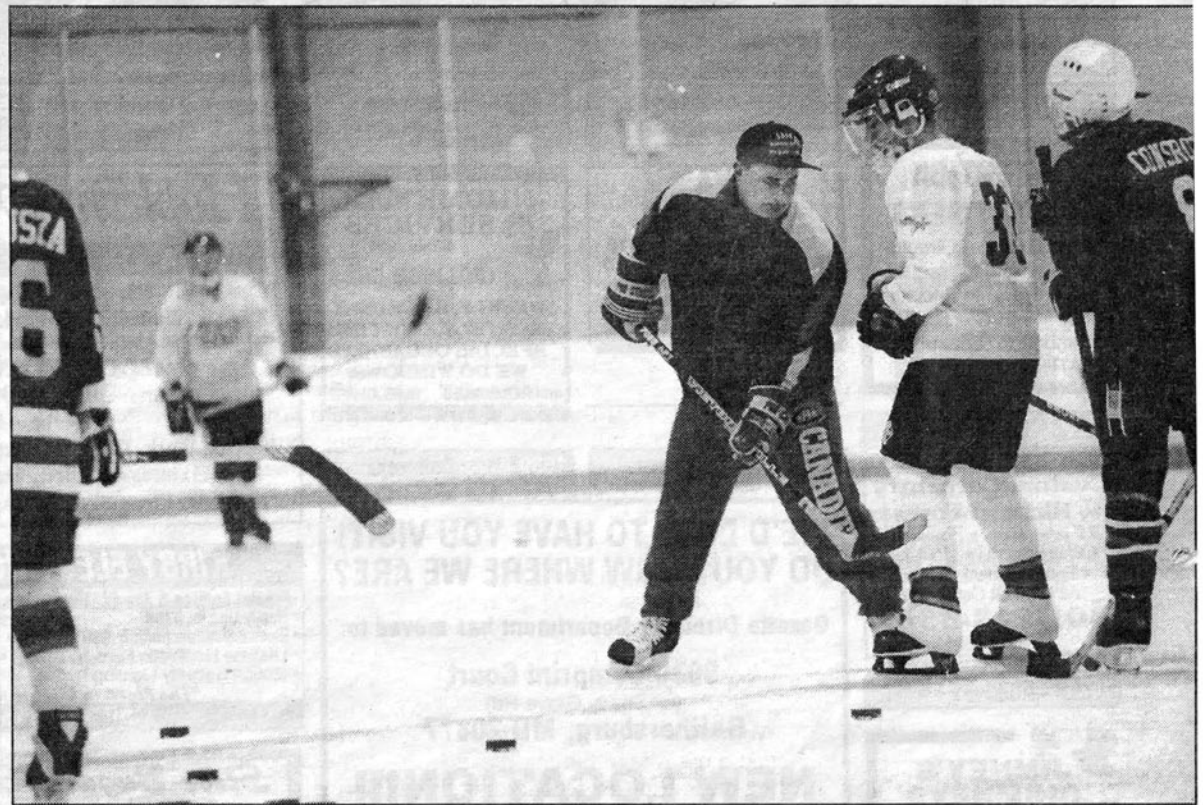
"We spared nothing, and a lot of facilities don't do that. They cut corners. What we're doing here in this facility is creating the standard, what will eventually be the standard for the industry. This is what people will demand When we get involved in an industry, we like to emerge as the leader."

But people like Garmat don't care about all that corporate mumbo-jumbo.

"What happened last year is we never knew where we were going to be from week to week, and every time it was a different place," Garmat said. "Frederick is quite a long haul. What this is doing is saving us a tremendous amount of time. That's probably the best thing."

But not the only thing. According to some of the high school players that are now practicing and playing at ARC, it's just nice to have somewhere to finally call home. Schools such as Magruder, Wootton and Churchill now have a local ice hockey haven. And the rinks even have the Montgomery Hockey 'M' insignia emblazoned on the ice.

"You see the emblem on the ice, and you can call this place your own," said Stuart Cirulnic,



Brian Lewis/GAZETTE

Wootton ice hockey coach John Burkinshaw works with Joey Lopreiato at ARC Ice Sports rink.

a sophomore left wing/center at Churchill. "It's Montgomery's rink."

Larry Andreas, the construction manager for the project, has three sons who play hockey. He used to take Ethan and Benjamin (both 18-year-old Good Counsel graduates now playing in NCAA Division III programs) to places like Reston, Va., and Fort Dupont in Washington, D.C.

"We could be at Fort Dupont at 9 o'clock at night . . . so you get home at 12 [midnight], and you

have Good Counsel practice at 6 a.m.," said Andreas, who is the commissioner of the Capital Beltway Hockey League, the governing body of area youth hockey. "People that play the sport become dedicated very early."

"I live 10 minutes away . . . off Shady Grove Road," said Churchill hockey coach Matt Revkin, whose Bulldogs will now practice every Wednesday at ARC and play there Friday nights. "I used to have to leave about an hour before practice.

Now I can pretty much leave 25 minutes before and get here 15 minutes early. It's awesome.

"It's going to help Montgomery County become more of a force in ice hockey at the public school level," Revkin continued. "It's going to help Montgomery County at the club level, because this is our home. Everybody goes to Laurel, and Tri-City is home. If you're in Howard County, [Tri-City] is Howard County's home. Now Rockville is Montgomery County's home."