

ABOUT OUR TOWN

Local Sports

Ice Fishing:
Finding Joy on a Cold, Cold Day

By: Michael Vandenberg



During the frigid temperatures last month, Michael Vandenberg learned about ice fishing by experienced outdoorsmen Bruce and Matt Litton of bedminster.

“There’s no such thing as casual ice fishing.” On a morning in early January when outdoor temperatures plunged well into the single digits, I chose to experience the most non-casual (but most rewarding) way to catch a fish. I met up with a couple of seasoned pros- Bruce Litton and his son, Matt- in the River Styx section of Lake Hopatcong in Northern New Jersey. The two, who hail from Bedminster, gave me a peek at the sport that dares to make fishing a year-round activity.

Bruce is no stranger to the outdoors: he updates his blog, [littonsfishinglines.blogspot.com](#), every few days with off-the-beaten-path hiking excursions, thoughts on goings-on in the nature enthusiast community, and successful catches on fishing trips throughout the year. He’s been fishing his whole life and will tell a layman like myself anything I want to know about pickerel and yellow perch. Still, a lot of people can fair-weather fish in New Jersey. Ice fishing though, because of its difficulty and added safety hazards, is a much more exclusive club.

When I met up with Bruce and Matt, they were unloading a car full of equipment for a process that looks a lot different from regular fishing, but is designed to end up working the same way. In the summertime you have bait, a fishing rod with a hook at the end, and some extra supplies- I’m sure you’ve seen it before. Of course, you don’t just leave your bait dangling in the same spot the whole time: you cast around to get a good spread of the area.

In ice fishing, you can’t easily cast around because there’s a thick layer of ice in the way. So, to increase your odds, you’ll want to cut multiple holes through the ice, about 10-15 yards apart. There are two different ways to do this. First is the old fashioned way: grab an axe or a splitting bar and smash your way through. The second, easier way is to have a gas (or hand-cranked) auger and drill through. Bruce and Matt ended up making about 10 holes spread out in a curved line stretching about 150 yards from our base of operations (a piece of land next to a three-foot wall down a hill from the parking lot). Breaking through and having water splash up from under my feet was surreal.

On each hole, they assembled devices called tip-ups. Each one has a spool, string, and hook for bait (we used small minnows) attached to a rod with an orange flag. The rod bends down and clips in place, but, when the string is pulled (hopefully by a fish and not seaweed) the rod “tips up” holding up the orange flag, alerting you that you got some-

thing. You’re essentially setting up 10 separate, self-functioning fishing rods clamped down to the ice.

The next step is the same as in regular fishing: wait in excited anticipation. We walked back to our base to relax, warm-up a bit, and observe the tip-ups from afar. Bruce had a small propane space heater set up on the wall, and we took turns trying somewhat in vain to fight off the arctic temperatures. Bruce also had a thermos of hot coffee. I’ve never been a fan of coffee’s general taste, but after silently kicking myself for the past hour for not bringing an extra layer of pants and hand warmers, I was ready to drink anything hot.

As cold as I was, it didn’t bother me too much. After all, it made our excursion possible. Ice should be at least 4 inches thick before you even think about stepping on it; Lake Hopatcong’s ice that morning varied from 7-9 inches with an additional blanket of snow on top. The sun, with its magnificent orange glow, rose over the hills on the horizon, breathing life for another day into this quaint lakefront community. We walked over near the docks for a better view. With the snow covering the ice, it was easy to forget that there was nothing but water beneath me.

After an hour, it was time for us to pack it in. We went out to collect each tip-up and to my surprise, nature had already begun fighting back. A thin layer of ice enveloped each string. We had to use the bait ladle to smash them free. Bruce noted that at that temperature, the hole would fill itself back in completely within a day or two.

We were only out there for two hours, so unfortunately we didn’t get a fish. But the experience was downright unique and worth pursuing for the thrill of it. Matt put it well, “It’s obviously a lot harder than regular fishing, but that’s what makes it so much more rewarding when you do catch something.”

Thinking about giving it a try? You’ll need a fishing license, but Bruce’s advice is to, “find someone who ice fishes to introduce you. Otherwise, as a beginner, only go out when others in-the-know are using a frozen lake, or if a pond’s ice is at least four inches thick. Hard, clear ice.” Going with someone who is experienced is the key: don’t go out by yourself, especially on your first try. Ice spikes- a tool you can wear around your neck and use to jam it into the ice if you go through and pull yourself out- are a safety tool you’ll want to consider acquiring. Be safe, stay warm, and have fun!

If you have an idea for a future sports-related article, email the author at mv3191@gmail.com or call 732-968-1615.

Piscataway Town News

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Best Buy Leases 725K Building in Piscataway

Rockefeller Group announced in January that it has signed a lease with Best Buy at its 228-acre site in Piscataway, New Jersey. The leading global real estate owner, developer and investor is developing the 2.2-million-square-foot, state-of-the-art Rockefeller Group Logistics Center there.

"We think that Best Buy made a great decision," Piscataway Mayor Brian C. Wahler said. "We welcome Best Buy to Piscataway and we are excited for the increased economic activity in our community."

Best Buy – now the first official tenant of the Logistics Center – will fully occupy a 725,000- square-foot building currently under construction. Through the opening of its new logistics facility, the omnichannel consumer electronics retailer anticipates that it will move more than 300 Best Buy and third-party jobs to Piscataway.

Best Buy plans to open the distribution center before the 2018 holiday shopping season. The facility will deliver major appliances and large-screen televisions to more than 90 Best Buy stores and directly to customers throughout New Jersey and parts of New York, Connecticut, Pennsylvania and Delaware. The facility will also provide customer service and support for repairs.

“We’re excited to expand our supply chain capabilities with this new, larger distribution center,” said Jeff Shelman, Best Buy spokesman. “With the growth of our appliance business and our strong market share position in home theater, this facility will help us serve our customers more effectively and more efficiently.”

“Signing a lease with a high-caliber company like Best Buy at the Rockefeller Group Logistics Center validates our vision for the master-planned development as one of New Jersey’s largest and most sought-after distribution hubs,” said Clark Machemer, senior vice president and regional development officer for Rockefeller Group's New Jersey/Pennsylvania operations.

“Furthermore, the company’s decision to take space in Piscataway is a testament to the

market’s recognition of the Interstate 287 corridor as the next frontier for well-located industrial development in the state.”

The Cushman & Wakefield team of Jules Nissim, Stan Danzig and Marc Petrella serves as the exclusive marketing and leasing agent for the development and represented Rockefeller Group in the transaction.

The master-planned Rockefeller Group Logistics Center will comprise six buildings upon its completion, ranging in size from 200,000 to more than 800,000 square feet. Representing a combination of speculative and build-to-suit opportunities, the properties can accommodate users with a wide variety of size and infrastructure requirements. The facilities also boast an advanced-functional-ity design that allows for future growth.

Mr. Nissim of Cushman & Wakefield commented: “Location absolutely remains key in New Jersey’s industrial market, and the Rockefeller Group Logistics Center provides Best Buy with a prime transportation-oriented location with access to the region’s major thoroughfares and robust labor pool. However, user requirements today go well beyond location. Best Buy was in search of a next-generation building that could support its continued growth, and that is exactly what the company committed to in Piscataway.”

Flexible transaction options allow for users to either lease or own space within the Rockefeller Group Logistics Center. Additional notable features and amenities include 40-foot building clear heights, excess trailer parking for each individual building, on-site rail service, two means of ingress and egress to the site, and an in-place 30-year PILOT agreement.

Rockefeller Group Logistics Center is especially ideal for users involved in e-commerce, thirdparty logistics, food and beverage, retail or other consumer products. Inquiries related to leasing or acquiring space within the Rockefeller Group Logistics Center can be directed to Mr. Nissim at jules.nissim@cushwake.com.

Healthy Half-Time Snacking Tips From a Pro

(BPT) - Healthy snacking and making good food choices can be difficult any time of the year, but it can be especially tough during the big game. Business Insider reports that only 80 percent of people who start a New Year's resolution keep that resolution through February. This happens to correspond with the biggest football game of the year and the common food temptations that go along with it - chicken wings, chips and salsa, pizza, not to mention beer.

Bryan Snyder, registered dietitian and nutrition director for the Denver Broncos, who is responsible for keeping the year-round nutrition strategies for the team's players on track, also knows the pitfalls for the fans. "I advise people trying to eat healthier to follow a sustainable meal plan."

Snyder describes a sustainable meal plan as one that allows some flexibility to have a meal here and there that might have a higher calorie intake.

"I often see people go from eating a poor diet and choosing unhealthy snacks, in combination with not exercising, to all of a sudden deciding to work out every day and eat perfectly every meal. The issue that can arise from that behavior is that it isn't a sustainable plan, and it doesn't allow any room for those big game snacks."

Snyder's recommendation is to find a nice middle ground. Allow yourself to sneak in some of those not-so-healthy calories on game day, but also give yourself some healthier options that you can have while keeping a guilt-free conscience.

Snyder's snack of choice? Pistachios. "Pistachios are loaded with antioxidants and fiber, which will help you feel full and prevent you from overeating during the big game, and give you an immune system boost as well."

Other healthy options are pita chips with hummus, vegetables with vegetable dip, bison or turkey burger sliders, popcorn, baked sweet potato fries, or a cup of turkey chili. For those who can't imagine game day without wings, Snyder suggests baking the

wings instead of deep-frying to replace some of the unwanted and unnecessary fats.

"Oftentimes we want to eat healthier, but we simply don't know what to eat," says Snyder. "All of these options are healthy swaps for satisfying game day enjoyment."

Snyder recommends, too, having a backup plan if you're going over to someone else's house to watch the game, as this can be one of the biggest pitfalls to straying from a diet. "Don't give yourself an excuse to eat poorly. Take along some portable healthy snacks - such as healthy bars, trail mix or pistachios - to be sure you have options and don't indulge in hours of unhealthy snacking."

While it is certainly understandable and sometimes difficult to eat healthy during the big game, it is something that can be done with the right planning and preparation, according to Snyder.

"One other common misconception about healthy snacking is that you have to sacrifice great taste," warns Snyder. "Follow this game plan, and I guarantee you won't."

Volunteers
Needed

NJ Blood Services, which supplies blood to 60 hospitals throughout the state, is in need of volunteers, to work blood drives. The blood mobile volunteer is an integral member of the blood collection team whose task it is assist donors with registration, perform canteen duties and make appointments for their next donation. Volunteers should have the ability to relate to the public, be able to perform different jobs as needed and have the willingness to follow the rules. For additional information contact, Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm, Manager of Community Relations & Volunteer Services Jan Zepka at 732-616-8741.