

C.R. Ice Arena all set for state volleyball

Written by Jim Ecker

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Don't worry about the girls slipping on the ice at the state volleyball tournament this week.

They've got it covered.

And don't worry about shivering like you might at a hockey game at the Cedar Rapids Ice Arena.

Event directors promise it will be nice and comfortable inside the building, despite all the ice.

The tournament begins Wednesday with the Class 4A quarterfinals at noon and 1:30 p.m., followed by the Class 3A quarterfinals at 6 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.

The Class 1A and 2A quarterfinals will be played Thursday, the semifinals in all four classes are Friday and all of the championship matches will be played Saturday.

Cedar Rapids Kennedy is the only Metro team in the tournament this year. The seventh-ranked Cougars will face No. 4 Dubuque Hempstead Wednesday at 1:30 p.m. on Court One.

The state tournament was moved to the Cedar Rapids Ice Arena from the U.S. Cellular Center due to a renovation project at the Cellular Center, and workers at the Ice Arena were putting the

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finishing touches on the facility Tuesday afternoon.

For one thing, they had to cover up all the beer signs, because that's not allowed at high school events. For another, they were installing a big, black drape between the two courts to improve the sight lines for players and fans.

Depending on where you sit, you won't be able to see both courts at once. If you sit in one of the "end zones" behind where the hockey goal would be, you won't be able to see the other court. They had to do it that way, or else the players could have been easily distracted by action on the other court.

The Ice Arena can hold roughly 4,400 spectators, compared to more than 7,000 at the U.S. Cellular Center, so it might get a little crowded for some of the more popular sessions. On the other hand, it should be a cozier environment with fans closer to the action.

It could get loud in the smaller arena. "I think they'll blow the roof off," predicted Jason Anderson, event manager for Venuworks, the company that manages the ice arena.

The ice is still there, but it's covered by thick insulation that hides it well. The temporary volleyball courts have been placed on top of the insulation, so there shouldn't be any problems with condensation or a slippery surface.

These are the same portable volleyball courts that they've used for state tournaments at the Cellular Center in previous years, brightly colored in blue and red.

Anderson said it's taken approximately 240 man hours to prepare the Ice Arena for the volleyball tournament, not greatly more than it would take to prepare the U.S. Cellular Center for the same volleyball event.

They left the glass walls in some spots around the arena, especially at the end zones to keep

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balls from flying into the stands on a regular basis.

The state tournament is scheduled to return to the U.S. Cellular Center in 2012, pending completion of the renovation project.

CLASS 4A SCHEDULE

Quarterfinals

Wednesday

Noon - Iowa City West (36-6) vs. Council Bluffs Lincoln (25-21), Court 1

Noon - Iowa City High (38-3) vs. Cedar Falls (26-12), Court 2

1:30 p.m. - Kennedy (29-9) vs. Dubuque Hempstead (25-8), Court 1

1:30 p.m. - Waukee (27-7) vs. Ankeny (28-8), Court 2

Semifinals

Friday

Noon - IC West/CB Lincoln vs. Kennedy/Hempstead

1:30 p.m. - IC High/Cedar Falls vs. Waukee/Ankeny

Finals

Saturday, 11 a.m.