

With wind and ice just right for sailing, the ice fleet gathers at Cass Lake.

How to get involved

By Richard Lech

Getting into ice sailing isn't easy.

But it's worth the effort, according to Robert Stack, who races and builds ice sailboats and sells them at his RS Ice Yachts/Coastline Styles stores.

"A lot of people come here and say, 'Can I try it?'" Stack said. "Unless you know somebody, it's hard to do."

It's difficult to "just go for a ride" with someone else to see what it's like, since most of the ice boats are built for only one person, Stack said. And the beginner can't rent a boat since no one rents them, Stack said.

Stack suggests that someone who's really interested in the sport invest in a good used boat. While a new boat can cost as much as \$3,000, a used boat can be had for anywhere from \$600 to \$1,000.

"All the rigging on the boat is actually what they're paying for," he said. "Rigging, runners and the sail. They can maybe put it on a better boat later, and update the sail."

The beginning racer can go out with one of the informal "fleets," such as the Cass Lake Yacht Club, which regularly take to the ice of such lakes as Pontiac and Cass and Lake St. Clair.

Ice sailors can find out where the action is by calling the fleet captains or by calling hot lines set up by such ice sailing stores as Boston Sails in Mount Clemens and Stack's own stores in Birmingham, Keego Harbor, Mount Clemens and Rochester.

For more information, call Stack at 682-2601.

Tailgating

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of Auburn Hills, a 1981 graduate, and a group of about 15 friends.

This unique dish, said Hans, provides some of the finest tailgate eating. Named after its chef, the recipe calls for bratwurst to be stewed in a concoction of beer and sauerkraut.

The Wally Dog goes well with beer, an occasional mixed drink, and hot toddies or cocoa when it gets cold, he said.

Putting the bratwurst on the grill is the first order of business for the group upon arrival at a pre-selected parking lot, said Hans. Then, "We all kind of gather around the grill and talk about last year and what's going to happen this year."

So loyal is this group of fans, that two of Han's fellow tailgaters, from New York and Florida, come in for every game.

"It's kind of an all-day affair when you have a tailgate," he said. "You have a tailgate before the game, then afterwards you sit there the rest of the day. I've been there many times when it's gotten dark, and we're still having fun."

At Michigan State, festive tailgate parties rival U-M's.

In fact, said Jill Sabiston of Troy, "A lot of times the games are pretty bad — so the parties better be good."

Jill and husband, Mike, who have season tickets to the games, have held tailgate picnics with friends since graduating two years ago.

"We have tons of food — just whatever kind of food you can think of," said Jill.

Their tailgate is a casual one.

"Half the time, we'll get one of those 6-foot-long party subs, or Kentucky Fried Chicken. We also have vegetables and munchies. We bring tables, and set it up on that."

Drinks include beer, wine coolers and "a few mixed drinks, sometimes."

They arrive around 10 a.m. and meet their friends at a "close spot" near Munn Ice Arena. They picnic until the game starts around 1 or 2:30 p.m.

"We usually stay for a little while until the traffic clears out."

Other regular fans of football and tailgating at both U-M and MSU could square off with their vans. Almost celebrities in their own right, these maize and blue and green and white vehicles are fully equipped with tailgate and school spirit paraphernalia.

A tailgate picnic can be turned into something special with a little planning.

Good tableware, attractive paper goods and food can be packed into wicker baskets. Prepare recipes that taste and look terrific.

A folding table and chairs are a good idea. A colorful tablecloth — it can be paper — and

flowers can set an elegant tone.

Don't forget the portable barbecue if you're loading the trunk with all-American fare such as hot dogs and hamburgers.

Local stores can provide ideas to help you tailgate in style and ease.


Twelve Oaks Mall, for instance, offered a wide range of ideas at a mall tailgating event in September that featured cars, tailgate samplings and fashions.

Participants featuring food included:

- **Pastissima.** At this recently opened Italian gourmet specialty shop, you can choose between 12 different homemade pastas, freshly rolled and packaged to order. Pasta varieties include basic egg, spinach, whole wheat and sweet red pepper. A pound will serve two-three people for a main course. Combine with a Pastissima sauce and salad, a loaf of their fresh bread, and take it home; you can have a tailgate meal ready in less than 10 minutes.


- **Michels Baguette.** A 6-foot-long sub is offered at \$10 a foot. The subs trademarks are fresh baked bread and vegetables, including lettuce, tomatoes, cucumbers and alfalfa sprouts. Layers also feature roast beef, turkey, smoked ham, and swiss and cheddar cheese, with Dijon mustard on the top, mayonnaise on the bottom. You might want to order an extra foot to calm appetites after the game.

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