

## The Jump

### IN PRAISE OF ... ZAMBONI

**Zamboni.** Sure, it sounds funny, but let's get one thing straight: There's nothing funny about a rutted, chipping ice surface. Okay? The estimable Frank

J. Zamboni sure knew it. And boy, did that man love to tinker. In 1949, with little more than a dream, an ice rink full of war-surplus parts and the entrepreneurial pluck of that spoke of a giddy, post-war America, he created the whimsical machine that proudly bears his name. And ice aficionados everywhere rejoiced. A fleet of more than 6,000 Zambonis have since rolled out of

the Paramount, Calif., factory, and still his eponymous contraption maintains just the right, hardy, no-nonsense design to melt frozen hearts from Caribou to Kamloops.

Even nonparticipants of the myriad ice sports have reason to cheer the great man's genius. Who hasn't basked in the hypnotic, between-periods calm of the circling mechanical dervish and marveled as the elegant synergy of stainless-steel blade, churning screw and big squeegee lays down a perfect  $\frac{1}{16}$  inch of ice as smooth as Lou Rauls' baritone, as shimmering as hand-blown Bohemian crystal?

Sure, there are imitators, "competitors," if you will. But what Kleenex and Fudgsicle are to facial tissue and frozen edible novelties, Zamboni is to ice resurfacing—the undisputed master. You'd have to scour the prairie to find someone who wants to be the Olympia Man, but you can be damn sure every red-blooded, beer-drinking knucklehead with a painted face wants his turn behind the wheel of The Original. Yes, there's only one

ride-along program that could ever matter to us. Until it exists, though, we'll have to be content to press close to the glass, breathing in the virile fumes of the Zamboni, ubiquitous and omnipotent, the coolest, sweetest chariot on the ice.



Zamboni: The ultimate driving machine.

