

KIT EVOLUTION

FREEZE COMPANY

From frozen lakes to Olympic arenas to your friendly neighbourhood ice-rink, one family firm, thanks to an enterprising ancestor, ensures that ice sports run smoothly



COLD START ZAMBONI MODEL A, 1949

Frank J Zamboni, a first-generation Italian-American, ran a nice little business in Paramount, California in the 1930s, producing ice for fruit and milk deliveries. The spread of refrigerators soon put a stop to it, but Zamboni and his brothers channelled their chilling skills into the production of an

ice-rink. However, keeping the rink smooth was more of a problem. It took four men using tractors, hoses and scrapers more than an hour to resurface it – too long, in Zamboni's view, and he got to thinking. His Model A ice resurfacer used army-truck axles powered by a Jeep engine. The hydraulics

came from a Douglas A-20 Bomber. The mechanism was ingenious: a blade peeled off the layer of rough ice, which was then shovelled into a tank on a conveyor belt, and the resulting surface was cleaned, sealed and smoothed with water. One man could do the job better and faster than four.



SMOOTH RIDE ZAMBONI 545, 2010

Over 50 years on from the Model A, there's hardly an ice surface that isn't prepared using the machines from Paramount. In all those years, the basics haven't altered much; improvements have come as tweaks rather than wholesale changes. The blade is applied to the ice with greater force, and

it's powered by a 78bhp Hyundai petrol engine (in the case of this 545 model) or an electric engine. Fast-rotating brushes, rather than lip seals, remove the snow, which is then lifted into the tank via a shaft rather than conveyor belt. The 545 holds 273 litres of water for cleaning and 738

litres of water for making fresh ice. Thanks to Zamboni the process of ice-cleaning has become an attraction in itself. Ice hockey fans in particular like to join in when the Gear Daddies' cult song is played over an arena's PA: "I wanna drive the Zamboni."

www.zamboni.com