

ROLLIN' ON THE RIVER

Ice: Gone.
Warmth: Here.
Fun: Continues.
Rink-a-dink-dink

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THE BLUE CROSS RiverRink reopens as an open-air roller rink Friday. It's the only local one of its

kind. And it's right on time.

The past two winters, heated lounges, craft shopping and cocoa-serving firepits, together called "Winterfest," have operated alongside the ice rink. From Thanksgiving 2014 to March, 100,000 people came.

Last summer, the nearby harbor at Spruce Street set up planted barges with bars, boardwalk games, misting trees, food vendors and neon hammocks for a pop-up park. Between July and September, half a million people came.

This year, it seemed only logical to expand Spruce Street Harbor Park northward, make use of the vacant RiverRink and call

it "Summerfest."

Ice be gone

"We had the rink. We had the dasher-board system," said long-time Delaware River Waterfront Corp. dude Joe Forkin.

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"We thought this could be really fun."

In the lounges, boathouse touches and vintage Chicago Roller Skates in tin boxes will replace antlers and log-cabin touches as decor. Skates with wheels, child's size 8 through adult size 12 (\$10 per rental), will replace bladed skates.

Perforated speckled polypropylene tiles made by Ice Court in Charleston, S.C., replace ice. A skate-in pergola will occupy the rink's center.

Squeegees will replace the Zamboni.

But who will replace the ice skaters?

Philly's famous skaters

Meek Mill, maybe.

On March 24, the North Philly-born rapper filmed his about-to-drop "Monster" video at Camden's Millennium Skate World. According to rink co-owner Tracy Akines, Mill was once a regular at the 15-year-old rink.





Rapper Meek Mill, outside Millennium Skate World, in Camden, where he used to take many a spin.

During the taping, the future Mr. Nicki Minaj “skated backwards and forward, doing a few tricks out there,” said Akines. For the shoot, he and his Dream Chasers crew went ’80s retro: shell



Kevin Bacon shows us how to “shoot the duck.”

tops, bucket hats, sweatsuits, gold bling and Cazals.

“It was a pleasure to have him back,” said Akines.

Another possible visitor? Kevin Bacon.

In 1979, Philly’s soon-to-be contribution to “Footloose” posed for an instructional tome titled “Roller Disco Dancing: Basic Steps on Wheels.”

Bacon demoed “the scissors kick,” “the can-opener,” “hop jumps” and “shoot the duck.” ■



CHARLES FOX / STAFF PHOTOGRAPH

At the de-iced RiverRink,
Norman Stewart and Yadsir Rivera are the wheel deal.



CHARLES FOX / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

An overview of the rink, just a quick roll to the Spruce Street Harbor Park.