

More Eyes on the Ice

By Dan Rosen - NHL.com Senior Writer

PHILADELPHIA -- NHL Facilities Operations Supervisor Don Moffatt was on his way back to Citizens Bank Park shortly before 9 a.m. this morning, a mere eight hours after he left the ballpark.

Moffatt, who was heading to the NHL staff shuttle, told NHL.com the crew was able to create almost an inch of ice before leaving the park after midnight. He seemed pleased with how well the night shift went and said he already had spoken to NHL Senior Director of Facilities Operations Dan Craig, who arrived at the park just after 6 a.m. to start the day shift.

Moffatt said the goal this morning is to try to get between an eighth of an inch and a quarter of an inch of ice on the surface before rain is expected to arrive around 11 a.m., but Craig told NHL.com later that with the rain coming there is no need to spray any more water.

So, instead he had members of the crew installing more cables for the Eye on the Ice technology.

Eye on the Ice -- long cables with temperature sensors on the end -- provides real-time information on the ice surface to Craig and his staff and allows them to make any necessary adjustments. In addition to the two sensors installed this morning, there are two others frozen to the ice trays on the rink floor.

Moffatt said having the two measurements gives the crew a much better idea of how the floor is running in relation to what the refrigeration truck is pumping.

NHL.com will have more on Eye on the Ice later, including a video with Craig explaining it in detail.

Craig and his staff could have some challenges to tackle depending on the type of rain that falls on Philadelphia.

It's expected to be a warm rain, but if it's the light, misty kind, then they'll be able to freeze it and, as Moffatt said, Mother Nature would have done their job for them. However, if it's a heavy, warm rain with large droplets, freezing it could be difficult and it could create some run-off, which may lead to some melting on the edges.

That would mean the crew would have to do more slushing. Slushing is a process by which they take snow from neighboring Wells Fargo Center, haul it to Citizens Bank Park, and pack clumps of it into the edges of the rink to fill the gap of roughly three quarters of an inch between the boards and the ice surface.