

A photograph of an ice karting track at night. The track is illuminated with red and blue lights. Several karts are visible, with drivers wearing helmets. The karts have yellow number plates with numbers 22, 3, and 23. The background shows a crowd of spectators.

CLEAR CONDITIONS MAKE ALL THE DIFFERENCE FOR ICE KARTING SUCCESS

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“This new dehumidifier equipment meant that all the moisture problems we’d had for the first six months were solved in only a few hours!”

NICKY BROOS
DIRECTOR OF SKIDÔME RUCPHEN, THE NETHERLANDS

CLEAR CONDITIONS MAKE ALL THE DIFFERENCE FOR ICE KARTING SUCCESS

Effective humidity management provides a big turn-around for Dutch ice dome venue

THE REAL-SNOW INDOOR EXPERIENCE

Skidôme Rucphen opened in 1996 as the very first winter sports centre in the Netherlands with real snow. The Skidôme facility has since been continually evolving and improving into a unique venue for indoor fun and entertainment.

In September 2011, this remarkable venue was completely renovated and extended, including a spectacular 3,500-square-metre ice kart track. This provides a real racer-like experience with electrically powered gokarts – fitted with spiked tyres for maximum grip – zooming round the track at speeds of up to 80 km/hour.

CLOUDING OVER

Unfortunately, however, the engineers responsible for designing the building were not familiar with the combination of very low temperatures and high humidity, and had therefore used natural ventilation in the Skidôme structure.

With indoor temperatures around 0°C and humidity sometimes in excess of 100% due to outside weather conditions, natural ventilation is actually the worst possible solution. This meant the Skidôme owner was experiencing constant build-ups of ice and moisture. This was giving problems everywhere – including the lighting, smoke detectors, the charging equipment for the electric gokarts, and the steel structure of the building.

There were persistent fog problems – caused by moisture condensing in the air – that impacted visibility as well as safety. And the whole ceiling of the building was constantly covered with droplets of condensing water, dripping onto the ice and onto the visitors. This created a bad indoor climate and poor-quality ice. The staff felt disgruntled and poorly motivated, and Skidôme users were dissatisfied because they were getting wet.

NO CURE, NO PAY

Lots of companies had promised to solve these problems – but none had come anywhere near succeeding. Nicky Broos, director of Skidôme Rucphen, was therefore sceptical when G & J Droogtechniek B.V., the local Cotes dealer, proposed a solution based on Cotes desiccant dehumidification technology.

However, the company was sufficiently confident to propose a “no cure, no pay” trial installation of a mobile Cotes CRT 9000 dehumidifier, aimed at reducing the relative humidity of the air inside the facility to approx. 60%.

PRACTICAL PAYOFFS

A few hours after the unit had been started up, the fog had disappeared completely. Soon after, the Ice Master phoned Mr. Broos to report that he simply couldn’t believe what was happening! By the time the Cotes Flexible dehumidifier had been running for a single day, the staff were delighted to see the ice build-up disappearing from the ceiling and the lighting fixtures.

Not surprisingly, this led to an order. The new Cotes Flexible CRT 9000E dehumidifier unit is actually placed next to the ice track, but according to Skidôme staff this is no problem because of the attractive modern design and extremely low noise level.

There have been big cost savings due to fewer breakdowns of electrical equipment, as well as fewer maintenance and repair problems because there is no more ice and no more moisture condensing on the steel construction, smoke detectors, lighting, etc. There is no longer any need for staff to spend time removing ice bumps on the track, caused by falling water.

The staff are much more satisfied – as are visitors, because the entire Skidôme experience has been vastly improved. According to the director of Skidôme Rucphen, “the new Cotes dehumidifier has helped make dramatic improvements to our operations – and to our profit margins”.

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