

Mild weather delays start of season for skiers and snowboarders

By Brian Lockhart

Residents of southern Ontario will have a much better chance of hitting the links and practicing their golf swing this month than finding an open ski hill.

Mild temperatures at the end of December have stopped many resorts from trying to make snow and melted the snow they did have, leaving ski hills bare and green.

The ski hills at the Hockley Valley Resort have no snow ? just the remnants of their efforts at the bottom of a couple of hills.

The resort had planned to open the hills in mid-December and were successfully making snow. However, the temperatures rose sharply, and the snow melted away.

On its Facebook page, the resort posted: ?Due to the inconsistent and widespread unseasonable temperatures, despite our snowmaking efforts, we are unable to open for skiing at this time. We will keep you posted as to opening dates as we await cooler temperatures and natural snowfall.?

Blue Mountain in Collingwood is also feeling the effects of the warmer temperatures, with hills closed, as well as other winter activities also currently suspended.

However, if you want to head a little farther north, Mount St. Louis Moonstone is reporting that a majority of its trails are open.

Horseshoe Valley Resort is reporting that around half of its hills are currently open. Nordic skiing is not available.

Snow Valley in Barrie is reporting that it has five of 21 runs operating. Other on-site activities are limited.

The situation may not get better any time soon. Weather reports indicate higher-than-normal temperatures over this week ? all above-freezing.

The lack of snow is also frustrating other winter enthusiasts ? notably snowmobilers.

The trails are all grass-covered, and it will need a few good snowfalls before they can get out there and groom the trails for riding.

On the positive side, people who don't like shovelling snow are happy about how this season is progressing.