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Slopes open for the season on the South Shore

By **Katherine Isbell**

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CANTON — Skiers and snowboarders took to the slopes on Thursday afternoon, riding the ski lift up to the top of the hill at Blue Hills Ski Area and making their way down through the powdery white snow.

Though there may not be snow on the ground around much of the South Shore, the hill is ready for the season, with three trails open on Thursday.

The ski area's snow-makers have been hard at work since the beginning of December, and operations opened for the season last week, about one week later than a planned date of Dec. 15 due to rain.

"We opened right around the time we usually open this year," said Molly Ross, the general manager of the ski area.

Ross said that advances in snow-making really help with how much snow the staff at Blue Hills are able to make, as well as how early they are able to open in the winter. Even with rain due Friday, she said that there should still be snow on the trails, because the snow guns make snow in piles that form a protective layer of ice on top so the rain "just slides right off," preventing the majority of the powder from melting away.

Thursday afternoon's weather was "fabulous," according to Milton resident John Connelly, who was at Blue Hills with his wife, Elaine, and their two daughters, Stephanie and Nicole. The family also enjoyed walking through the reservation's trails and seeing the animals at the Blue Hills Trailside Museum.

People of all ages were at the ski area Thursday, from tots taking to the slopes for the very first time to seasoned pros excited for the arrival of another ski season.

First-time snowboarders Cowan Wang and Kacem Damon described the snow as "icy."

It was the pair's first time ever getting out on the slopes.

"We're just trying to learn," Wang said. "We kept falling down, but we got back up."

They both said that they will be back to continue working on learning to snowboard, but they hope that there are more trails open and more snow on the ground.

Damon said that they will bring their friends, and he joked that he might even bring his mom once he improves a bit.

"It's a nice place," he said.