



LAURA STAMM POWER SKATING

THE IMPORTANCE OF SKATING IN BECOMING A COMPLETE HOCKEY PLAYER

Watching the NHL playoffs this season, everyone should recognize that today's hockey is a thrilling sport of blazing speed. Hockey requires players to be masters of balance, agility, and maneuverability (BAM), all while moving FAST on a platform as thin as a knife's blade. It is an intricate and difficult sport, comprised of numerous and complex skills (skating, stick-handling, passing, shooting, team systems, etc) that must all mesh together. To master this sport takes years of learning, practice, and hard work.

The ability to control the puck and do magical things with it at amazing speeds are attributes only of the greatest hockey players. These skills are developed naturally by only a minority of them. Most spend years developing what appears to observers to be an inborn gift.

Coaches, scouts, and team managers seek out players who can skate FAST – from stop to go, from slow to fast, whether skating forward or backward, when starting, cornering, turning, weaving, or transitioning. Although most NHL players are good puck handlers, they also need to skate fast (forward and backward) with the puck. If they can't, their effectiveness is limited.

Proper skating technique is key to, and an integral part of, becoming a successful hockey player.

Many young players do not realize that skating motions are NOT natural to the human body! But they are not! In fact, skating motions are almost the opposite of natural. We are born to walk and run, not to skate! Therefore skating technique must be taught/learned/practiced over a period of many years!!!

Throughout my teaching career parents have told me (many thousands of times) “my son/daughter is a great hockey player – he/she just can't skate well enough or fast enough.” This statement reflects a lack of understanding. How can someone be a great hockey player if he or she can't skate well (and fast)??? The sport of hockey requires speed! I have seen thousands of elite hockey players struggle to skate faster, not because they lack for conditioning, but because they lack for correct skating technique. They have



grown up “skating” – but not necessarily skating properly.

Since coaches want their players to develop “fast feet”, players are put through a lot of “fast” skating drills. But unfortunately it is too common for players to move their feet fast without actually moving fast – and they end up “going nowhere fast”. Remember that speed is a measure of distance traveled in time, so while strides must be done rapidly they must also cover distance!

Proper off-ice training combined with sprint-skating are important for developing skating speed. But correct skating (technique-training) is the first step. **TECHNIQUE COUNTS!**

Jack Blatherwick, a world renowned expert in the field of off-ice training says:
“The process of becoming a complete hockey player is a multi-edged sword: Without proper technique,

no amount of off-ice training will help a player optimize his or her skating. On the other hand, without a good

physiological base of strength, explosiveness, and muscular endurance (in a good skating position) skating instruction will have less effect. If a hockey player cannot get down on one leg to a good squat position, cannot explode from there, or cannot repeat it over and over without fatigue compromising the position – that player will never benefit (as much as possible) from skating instruction.”

“However, without good skating fundamentals, no amount of strength and power will allow players to reach their optimal skating speed.”

Some think that players over the age of 16-18 can no longer change their skating technique. However, this is not the case. Over the years I have worked with hundreds of high level players. If they believe that modifying their skating techniques can help them succeed, they will be willing and able to make changes. Some of my greatest successes have been with college, junior and pro players. So remember - it’s never too late to improve skating technique.

While we want players to skate fast, we also emphasize that they should skate properly! The LAURA STAMM INTERNATIONAL POWER SKATING SYSTEM® teaches players to execute every hockey move correctly, then powerfully, then explosively, and then quickly, and then to execute the moves correctly, powerfully, explosively and quickly with the puck, in game situations. This progressive, building block approach makes for long term improvement - but it takes a long time and many years of practice to learn, master, and achieve permanent results.

Ask the pros who put in years of effort if it was worth it; without exception, they’ll say they couldn’t have made it without all that intense time spent focusing on proper technique training.

Suggestion: Put skating technique high on your list of essential hockey skills. The benefits will be long-term and well worth the effort!