



**LAURA STAMM POWER SKATING**

## **COMBINE SKATING TECHNIQUE WITH CONDITIONING**

This tip is based upon my reply to an article, *COACHING SPEED*, that appeared in a recent issue of “Stops and Starts” Magazine.

The premise of the article, as well as other articles on the same subject, is that proper off-ice training along with sprint skating, players will be able to maximize their skating speed and over-all performance on the ice.

While I agree that proper off-ice training and sprint skating are very important in developing skating speed, there is a piece in this article that is missing – this missing piece is **Skating Technique**. Skating technique is a separate, distinct and **imperative** aspect of hockey training at **every** level.

Jack Blatherwick, a renowned expert in the field of off-ice hockey training, says:

“The training process is a double-edged sword:

Without proper skating technique, no amount of off-ice training will allow a player optimize his or her skating performance.

On the other hand, without a good physiological base of strength, explosiveness, and muscular endurance

(in a good skating position), skating instruction will be less effective.

If an athlete cannot get down on one leg into a good squat position, cannot explode from there, or cannot repeat it over and over without fatigue compromising the position – that athlete will not have maximum benefit from skating instruction.

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

During my many years of teaching power skating I have seen thousands of hockey



players struggle (often unsuccessfully) to skate faster, not because they lack for conditioning, but because they lack for correct skating technique. A major reason that they lack correct skating technique is that they lack the **knowledge** of how to perform skating maneuvers correctly. They have grown up “skating” but often without knowing how to skate correctly.

Some coaches believe that high school, college, and pro players cannot change their skating technique. This is just not so. Some of my greatest successes have been with college, major junior and pro players. It’s never too late to learn, it’s never too late to change (or at least modify) technique. If this was true, the greats in golf and tennis wouldn’t spend so much time (almost daily) working on technique and “going back to basics” with their coaches.

My technique-training program for elite players includes extensive off-ice training, including plyometrics, strength and power training, explosiveness, and flexibility training – along with a broad base of on-ice instruction in the intricacies of hockey skating techniques. Players train on slideboards and skating machines as well working on skating techniques on the ice.

Some sessions involve sprinting (over-speed training) on and off the ice. However, when skating, we *always* emphasize that players must attempt to skate properly, even when performing difficult maneuvers at speeds that are out of their (current) control or comfort zones.

Coaches should do everything possible to enhance their players’ speed. By encouraging them to improve their skating technique, to participate in well-rounded off-ice programs, and to perform on-ice sprint drills **correctly, powerfully, and quickly**, coaches will be able to find ways to accomplish this.

For a detailed explanation of how to execute each hockey skating maneuver correctly and powerfully, refer to

**LAURA STAMM’S POWER SKATING, fourth edition.**

During the off season, we encourage players of all ages and levels to consider enrolling in a Laura Stamm Power Skating Clinic in your area.

Skate Great Hockey!