



Technique Training – How Much is Enough?

Through the years I have noticed that only a relatively small percentage of players enroll in power skating courses on a continuing basis. The belief, I fear, is that one clinic teaches it all.

The players I've taught most successfully (including the pros) are the ones who have attended my programs once or twice a year, for five to ten years!

Perfecting any athletic skill is a long-term process that involves comprehension, practice and much repetition. In hockey, many skills are required. **Skating**, however, is still the most important.

There are numerous hockey skating moves and to play at the high levels players must master all of them. Most non-skaters don't understand that even the most basic maneuvers take a long time to master; the most advanced skating skills are extremely complex and intricate.

Laura Stamm Power Skating, like a pyramid, relies upon building a strong base. All skills are based upon previously developed skills. Skill development is always a work in progress.

To help young players understand the complexities of hockey skating, I created, several years ago, the Laura Stamm Achievement Ranking Program. Upon passing each test level, students are awarded the appropriate badge. Tests (nine of them) progress from relatively simple to very difficult and intricate hockey moves. It can take eight years to complete the highest (Elite level) test. The players that complete it are superb skaters whose speed and agility are spectacular.

It fascinates me to see players who have studied with me for years get still better at each training session. There seems to be no limit to the amount of learning that is possible.

Ours has never been a conditioning program. The goal is to teach players first to skate correctly; then correctly and powerfully; then correctly, powerfully and quickly; then correctly, powerfully and quickly with the puck, and then with the puck in game situations. This takes years of learning and years of practice. Of course, in this process players also become well-conditioned athletes.

Many skating techniques can (and should) be practiced off the ice as well as on the ice, especially when ice time is limited. Some activities that are specific to the skating muscles and the skating motion are in-line skating, slide boards and skating treadmills. When performed properly these activities can help enhance skating technique.

Whether training on or off the ice, concentrate first on **skating correctly**. Later on you will spend much time trying to **skate fast, correctly**.

by Laura Stamm, © March, 2001