What is Power Skating Anyway?

In my experience, most power skating programs are actually conditioning programs. While conditioning is an important aspect of hockey training, it, by itself, does not turn out a great skater.

Consider the training of a world class tennis player or golfer. These athletes, trained since childhood on the importance of fundamentals, never stop practicing them. Even minor slumps reinstate the "back to basics" training regime.

Hockey kids are put out on the ice with a stick and puck and told, "Skate". Not told or taught how to skate, but just, "Skate (fast)". The assumption is that by skating more and (moving the legs) a million miles an hour they'll skate faster. Wrong! They may learn to move their legs fast, but they may end up going nowhere fast.

Over my 30 years in the sport I've watched millions of hockey players - every age, every level - from novice to pro. I still cringe at the terribly small percentage of pros who are great skaters.

From my earliest days of teaching (and even now), the most repetitive request from parents of hockey students is to "skate them hard", "make them work", "get them tired". As if the purpose is to have children come off the ice with their tongues hanging out, crawling to the locker room (so they'll sleep well that night)? Is this a measure of learning?

Everyone wants to skate hard and to have a good workout. And I make sure that they always get that! But my power skating program is a **technique training** program. The purpose is to teach players **how to go somewhere – fast**. The players who attend my program over the long term learn how to properly execute every maneuver in the entire hockey repertoire. They become not just fast, but powerful, stable, explosive and efficiently fast.

To become a great athlete there must be an interaction between the brain and the body. Learning a sport requires a combination of mental function and muscle function. Brain power combined with muscle power. The ultimate goal is to create muscle memory. But the brain is boss. It teaches the body what and how to do. So it must understand what and why and how to do.

The brain cannot learn when the body moves madly. It needs to assimilate information. It needs first to figure things out and then to transfer signals to the muscles so that the muscles can perform correctly.

The best way to go fast is to first slow down.

In my Power Skating System we teach each part of a skating maneuver separately. We then combine the parts to create the whole (completed) move. If you've read my book you know that there are dozens of hockey maneuvers. Each maneuver has many parts. For example there are at

least 40 parts to the move called, "The Forward Stride". After teaching the parts, we now introduce one other elements, such as the puck. Technique blows up - at least for awhile. The brain must assimilate the added element and transfer this information to the muscles. Now we add another element, such as skating fast with the puck. Technique blows up again. Apply this building block process to all the hockey maneuvers and you'll understand why it takes years to teach and years to master hockey skating.

The process:

- Learn first to execute a maneuver correctly.
- Then correctly and powerfully.
- Then correctly, powerfully, quickly.
- Then correctly, powerfully, quickly with the puck.
- Finally, correctly, powerfully, quickly with the puck, in game situations and under lots of pressure.

There is no short cut so don't expect to become a great skater after one power skating program. But stay positive and stay committed to the long term. Within 8-10 years it will all "click in" and you will Skate Great Hockey!

by Laura Stamm, © May 2001