

TUCKER HOCKEY TIPS

Why is Connor McDavid so special?

Connor McDavid is arguably the best hockey player in the world today maybe just behind Sidney Crosby. He won the Art Ross Trophy – the leading point getter in the regular season - with 100 points; the 3rd youngest in NHL history to do so. As well, he received the Ted Lindsay Award – best player voted on by the players and the Hart Memorial Trophy as the league’s MVP. Wow, what a season!! He’s only 20 years old and listed at 6’ 1” and 190 pounds. It’s only a matter of time as he gains more experience, fills out and gets stronger to become truly the best player in the game. Why? There is no other player on the planet who currently skates as fast as McDavid does, with the puck. Not since Pavel Bure has a player carried the puck with so much speed. Connor McDavid was clocked this season skating with the puck at 38 km per hour. He is one of the few players who can score goals off the rush in today’s game. The majority of his 30 goals were scored off the rush because defensemen have trouble handling his incredible speed! McDavid has a special skating gift. He can reach his top gear / high end speed in only a few quick strides. He has incredible edge control and explosive / quick feet. Besides being naturally gifted this young man has worked diligently spending 1,000’s of hours honing his skating craft. He’s been working on his quick feet and quick hands with the puck for over a decade. McDavid has an incredible desire to improve his skills, desire to compete, and will to win and to get better. The likes of a Connor McDavid only comes around in the hockey world once in a blue moon if you know what I mean. He’s a rare and a specially gifted player! It’s probably only a dream for others to think they can ever reach McDavid’s level of play.

The Importance of Skating Development

However, most players aspire to play pro hockey, semi – pro hockey, collegiate hockey, junior hockey or even make city quadrant bantam or midget hockey some day. It’s of paramount importance to develop their skating skills. Skating is to hockey what running is to soccer. Skating is the foundation upon which all other skills are built – it affects puck control, passing, shooting and checking. If a player wants to get to the next level he or she must be a great skater to keep up and excel!

For nearly 20 years now I have enjoyed as well as my fellow Tucker Hockey on ice instructors helping players with their endeavours to get their skating to the next level of hockey. Thousands of players have attended our Minor Super Power Skating, Elite Power Skating, Technical / Tactical Skating Programs as well as Customized 1 on 1 Skating Programs. Curriculum descriptions of our various power skating programs are available on our website www.tuckerhockey.com

The following list is just a small sample of the quadrant level players / teams / groups or above who have participated in our programs over the years.

Players:

Brooklyn Paulin - Bantam AA Girls Hockey

Colton Buckler - Bantam AA Edge School

Connor Michaud – Midget AA Varsity Edge School

Darren Martin – Bantam AA

Levi Hulston - Bantam AA, Humboldt Broncos (SJHL)

Noah Kelly – Midget AA

Realt Brodreau - Bantam AA NW Flames Shane Doherty - Midget AAA

Brayden Dunn Midget AAA North Stars, La Ronge Ice Wolves (SJHL)

Cole Sartario North West Midget AAA Flames, Chilliwack Chiefs (BCHL)

Frank Portman - Calgary Junior B Blazers Adam Rosen - High River Junior B Flyers

Mitchell Wainman - Banff Hockey Academy AAA Prep / Junior B

Jessica McIntosh - Mount Royal Cougars Women's Varsity Team

Megan Craver - Mount Royal Cougars Women's Varsity Team

Alannah Jensen - Lethbridge Women's Varsity Hockey Team

Levi Johnson - Midget AAA Notre Dame Hounds, Drayton Valley Thunder AJHL

Jordan Evans - Drumheller Dragons, AJHL

Liam McKay - Wentworth Institute of Technology NCAA Div 3

Simran Sandhu - Calgary Junior A Canucks, Victoria BCHL, University of Ottawa

Alex Allan - University of Alabama – Huntsville

Mark Bomersback - Ferris State University, Iowa Stars AHL

Darcy Campbell - University of Alaska - Fairbanks, Lake Erie Monsters – AHL, Columbus Blue Jackets – NHL

Teams / Groups:

Alberta 97 Jets Bantam AA / AAA Calgary Buffaloes Bantam AA

Midget AA Canucks SikSika Nations Midget AA /AAA

When attending our power skating programs, players will hear myself and other Tucker Hockey on ice instructors emphasize the importance of the following skating teaching points: Good hockey stance, deep knee bend, feel your edges, strong edges, flex your ankle, longer strides, push harder, more power, quicker feet, S.A.M. – Stability, Agility and Mobility and many other technical skating terms.

Finally, I will quote Paul Coffey, former Edmonton Oiler defenseman & Hockey Hall of Famer and one of the best skaters who ever played the game. "I was a natural skater, but I also took private lessons to enhance my skills". In Peter Twist's book - *Complete Conditioning for Hockey* he quotes Coffey – "Many hockey players do not realize the importance of skating until near the end of their playing careers – how they would have been a much better hockey player if they had developed their skating more".

It 's important for players to learn how to skate correctly both forwards and backwards - with better technique – stronger edges – longer strides - more power – more explosiveness - more quickness as well as improved agility and mobility without and with the puck.

The game is getting faster at every level of hockey now! Players who can't keep up have little chance of making it to the highest levels. Do you have a desire to get to the next level and excel?