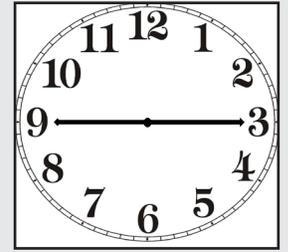




Tucker Tips

3 & 9 Skating Skill



Skating is the most important hockey skill. World Class skaters such as Sidney Crosby of the Pittsburgh Penguins display many strong technical skating skills which are transferred into tactical game skating.

Such an example of an advanced skating skill is the 3 & 9. This skating maneuver has a player turn his or her heels together i.e. in a 3 & 9 positions. Think of a time clock - the toes are pointed towards the 3 & 9 position - heels are together. Players open up their hips and this skating position offers a 180 degree side ways perspective of the ice. This requires great flexibility, deep knee bend as well as strong balance and edge control.

This 3 & 9 skating skill helps players hone skating skills as well such as: v - starting; open up pivots which lead to agility / mobility skating. Drill progressions to help teach this skating skill are as follows:

1. Players can practice flexibility by alternating hip openings from a stationary position on the ice. Hip open to the left, hip open to the right and later open up both hips at the same time. Open up 90 degrees each way.
2. Next do open up pivots on the circle. Players pivot heel to heel - forward to backwards, backwards to forward, forward to backwards and backwards to forward going clockwise and later counterclockwise.
3. Now progress to doing the 3 & 9 skill around pylons. Players can practice this skating skill by skating around two pylons in a figure eight position. Going to the left - the player leads with the left toe and positions his or her skates heel to heel and going to the right leads with the right toe and positions his or her skates heel to heel. Posture is critical to performing the skill properly. It's very important to keep the head up and keep the butt down - a low centre of gravity sitting type position. After a player performs the drill well around two pylons, a player can practice going down the ice around 6 to 8 pylons positioned in a straight line - the player alternates from left to right and right to left side. Coach



Rex has fun with it and calls it the "Hawaii Five -O" drill - it's like surfing down the ice! Play the theme music in your head when you do the skill! Both drills can be advanced by having the player do the drill with a puck. For a player who is a left handed shooter going to the left the player leads with the puck and stick around the pylons whereas when leading with the right foot the left handed shooter drags the puck from behind around the pylon. It really helps players open up the hips 180 degrees or as far as possible.

Once the technical skills of the 3 & 9 have been mastered properly a player can practice the tactical skating skills of puck protection, keep away, evasive moves and generating scoring opportunities. Sidney Crosby utilizes the 3 & 9 skating skill exceptionally well in a game especially off the wall down low in the offensive zone - protecting the puck, playing keep away from the opposition, performing evasive moves to shake a checker and skate off the wall and open up in the 3&9 position to take a shot on goal. It can be a very dangerous and effective move.

As well, Jarome Iginla will often open up into the 3 & 9 position when stickhandle down the right side of the ice and over the opposition's blue line. This position offers him a 180 degree side view of the offensive zone vs. toe skate caps pointed to the opposition's end boards. Jarome being a right handed shooter can view the net zone, slot zone as well as any teammates breaking over the blue line - i.e. trailers. It provides him with more options to make a play in the offensive zone.

Next time you watch Sidney play or other elite hockey players look for the game within the game for specialized skating skills such as the 3&9 skating skill. To develop into an elite skater, players need to master a full curriculum of power skating skills without and with the puck. One of the specialized advanced skating skills is the 3 & 9 maneuver.