



## **WHAT IS OFF ICE**

## **TRAINING?**

## **WHY DO IT?**

Realistically if a skater wants to be successful within the IJS system, they have to be preparing & performing, demanding & complex elements from a fairly young age.

These demands on the skater's bodies increase more & more as they develop through the levels.

As coaches we need to ensure that our student are in a condition to be able to cope with these increased demands, otherwise injuries will occur more frequently.

It would not be safe coaching practice for us to teach a skater an element that they are not physically or mentally prepared for.

Take an axel for example: the skater requires significant plyometric strength in the legs to take off; they need core strength to keep their weight over the skate in the air & even checking out of a jump involves the contraction of the abdominal muscles & lower back to stop the rotational force of a jump.

This is why off ice class activities are a vital part of a skater's training.

These include –

- 1) Learning correct warm up & cool down routines to prepare the body for skating & to prevent injury.
- 2) Flexibility training, so joints & muscles are flexible enough to perform elements like spirals, Bielman position, laybacks, donut spin, Y balances etc.
- 3) Dry-land & plyometric training to increase explosive power & strength in the muscles, Body awareness & rotation.
- 4) Off ice conditioning including; circuit training, core stability exercises including Pilates & wobble board exercises, activities to increase their cardiovascular capacity; For older students weight training & gym activities.
- 5) Ballet, gymnastics & Dance classes.
- 6) Ability to goal set & use mental imagery.

All of these different aspects have a huge positive impact on the skater's abilities on the ice.

In Russia many rinks close down for the whole summer & the skaters use this opportunity to do extra preparation for their body & fitness levels for the season ahead.

In a year they actually spend more hours of training their bodies off the ice than they do on the ice... & let's face it the Russians aren't doing too badly from that!

Our coach Diane Dewar spent a summer in Vancouver, Canada a few years ago with a group of skaters & got to see first hand what their Schedule was like. They did 2 on ice classes & 2 off ice classes 5 days per week, & flexibility training of some degree every day!

Now ok these guys were at the top of their game but my point is this –

As a club, we coaches are providing off ice classes to accommodate the accelerated development of our club members so the skaters can aspire to be all they can be.

**We realise it is extra commitment from you, the parents, but we ask you to realise that off ice training is a vital part of your child's success in this sport.**