Skating Drills

School teachers regularly use “Drill and Practice” as a tool to convey material to young students. A newer approach has been to incorporate materials into a computer games that performs the same task as Drill and Practice, but the learning process is faster and fun because of the game format. It is possible to introduce a competitive aspect to the process that motivates students.

Skating coaches can also use to improve a skater’s chance of establishing good technique. Care must be taken to properly organize drills that are relevant for positive skill transfer to take place.

Drills to teach power, stopping, and turning skills are effective; however, drills for free skating have not proven to be effective.

When should drills be used has been a major question. Generally drills are most successful during a summer workshops since skaters have more time to explore improving their balance and co-ordination that is the foundation on which future learning can take place.

The use of drills is best suited to groups of skaters rather than individuals.

Effective drills should:

- Have a specific purpose and meet the objectives set for the practice
- Be suitable for the age, skill level and physical maturity of the skater
- Be applicable to the skills used in the sport. A drill that does not serve any purpose is meaningless to both the athlete and the coach
- Follow a progression from simple to complex
- Challenge the skill level of the athlete
- Be varied and innovative
- Use musical tempos that stimulate the action of the participants
- Should emphasize good technique
- Introduce competition into the drill where possible to raise the participant’s interest and intensity levels
- Remain flexible in the development and running of the drills
- Run for short periods amount of time
- Flow from one drill to another in a progression.
- Use the entire ice surface width and length
- Plan drills to be executed at a high tempo followed by a rest to achieve a conditioning effect
- Encourage fun; don’t be a marine drill Sergeant. This is not boot camp.
- After drills, evaluate for effectiveness
- Improve areas of weakness observed during drill competition or practice
- Does the concept of drills show an overall improvement in skills?