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The Physical Challenge Of Hockey

By Gray Rollins

Hockey is one of the most physically demanding games known to man. This intense sport requires

that a skater have as much strategy and skill as football or baseball player in addition to the strength that only a conditioned athlete can bring to the ice, and a kind of ferocity that is a rare quality indeed. Hockey players must tolerate quite a bit of pain and discomfort, and serious players must be able and willing to participate in very heavy training all through the year to remain competitive. Unlike many sports that primarily require endurance, Hockey is all about sudden short bursts of extremely intense activity. This makes hockey a very different kind of physical challenge than a sport like soccer where movement is lower-intensity but continuous. A hockey player must be able to rev their personal engine from zero to sixty in a matter of seconds. At the pro level, a hockey player rarely spends more than a full minute at a time actively skating on the ice. Between those brief flurries of almost manic activity, a player can recover and catch his or her breath, but must remain alert and in readiness for the next explosion of action on the ice. Suddenly jumping from a fairly passive and relaxed state to the height of speed and power isn't easy. The discipline and talent a hockey player must possess in order to do this well are often a large part of what separates the amateurs from the professionals.

The need to be able to swiftly transition from a state of rest to one of peak activity requires specific forms of training that focus on shortening response times and achieving graceful and efficient movement without much of a warm up. A hockey skater's workout regimen contains many predictable activities like lifting weights and jogging, but one place where many players go in order to improve their agility and response time proves to be somewhat surprising to many sports fans.

Although classical music and pink tulle are the last things most people associate with the rough and tumble sport of hockey, many players train at ballet studios. From young boys and girls who are in amateur junior leagues all the way up to Olympic-level hockey players, spending time refining plies at the ballet barre often proves to give skaters a leg up on the ice.

>From dance studios to weight rooms to jogging tracks, a hockey player must train his or her body in a variety of ways to prepare for what many consider the most physically demanding of all sports. Between the strenuous flurries of activity, the psychological stress of performance, the lack of warm up time, and the bulky padding of a hockey uniform, a player at the top level of competitive hockey may

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sweat away up to eight pounds of water weight during the course of a single game. There is no other sport where this kind of drastic weight loss due to exertion happens so quickly. A hockey player's body must be prepared to safely weather this kind of ordeal on a regular basis, which requires a level of physical fitness that few other sports require.

Gray Rollins is a featured writer for HockeySky. To learn more about hockey visit

<http://www.hockeysky.com/>

and

<http://www.hockeysky.com/hockeyplayer/>

It's October and there are no NHL hockey games on the horizon.

By Catherine Kenyeres

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It should be the start of the NHL hockey league 2004–2005 season but it's not happening. The sports arenas across North America are quiet. There are no piercing sounds of whistles, no scraping sounds of hockey skate blades digging into the ice or pucks being slammed into the boards. The television crews normally setting up to televise the games are nowhere in sight. The NHL hockey players, coaches, and TV crews are off doing something else this season.

And there is no sign of NHL hockey coming back any time soon. The owners and the players are on opposite sides of the spectrum and there have been no talks since September 9, 2004. No further talks have been scheduled. The longer the impasse continues, the greater the blackout will carry on. Hence, in all probability, there will be no hockey season this year.

It's for certain that no games will be played in October or November for that matter. As for December, even if the sides come to some agreement, December will most likely be used for training and the earliest a game can be played would be January.

What are the players doing? 200 of them (1/4) are currently in Europe playing hockey. Their contracts have out clauses which mean that if the NHL starts up again, they will return to North America to play here.

And if you are a die hard fan needing to see a hockey game, the minor hockey leagues are up and running in the smaller towns and are happy to have you come out and see them play.

Catherine Kenyeres is a freelance writer and publisher of <http://www.best-4u-tickets.com>. Catherine has written numerous articles for the sports enthusiast.



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