

Hockey training hits treadmill

Newmarket

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By: Amanda Persico, Staff Writer

Hockey is all about speed. It's the faster players who puts the biscuit in the basket and through the five hole most often.

At Newmarket's newest hockey training facility, players don't feel the swish of the ice, but the pull of a harness and the roll of a treadmill under their skates.

High Speed Skating is a state-of-the-art hockey training facility where players are suspended from the ceiling and skate on a surface that rolls at a top speed of about 30 km/h with an incline up to 35 degrees.

"Skating on a treadmill is the same as on ice," said Ty Boisseau, 8, a novice double-A player with the Aurora Tigers. "It makes you take longer strides. With better strides, you skate faster and can be a better hockey player."

The specially treated treadmill, coated with silicone to be slippery, is like a moving synthetic ice, High Speed Skating owner and operator Scott Raisbeck said.

So far, the facility has trained more than 14 teams and 200 skaters, from novice to junior.

It's a whole different puck-chasing game when the ice and the player are moving.

"Everyone looks like a spaz on the machine," he said. "Even elite players look like first-time skaters."

After a few workouts on the treadmill, it becomes natural, like skating on ice, Mr. Raisbeck said. With individual attention, the training facility works the players as if they were playing in a real game.

"It's the same workout as playing a hockey game," Mr. Raisbeck said. "There are intense drills for 30 or 40 seconds, just like a shift in a game, where they play full force."

Through different drills and positioning on the treadmill, players learn the basic moves of shuffling, crossovers, pivots and coast-to-coast gliding.

But before players advance to a puck and stick handling, there's a little math involved. Each training session is recorded and broken down, frame-by-frame, to analyse the player and knee and body angles, Mr. Raisbeck said.

"This training improves skating and confidence," Mr. Raisbeck said. "They really begin to play the game."



STAFF PHOTO/SJOERD WITTEVEEN
Bradley Shannon, 8, of the Aurora Tigers double-A novice team practises his skating at High Speed Hockey on Mulock Drive in Newmarket.

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