



Is it Ok For Mites To Train Off Ice

Dr. Clint Steele, DC, CSCS

My son is a mite travel hockey player and this year will be his final year of mites. He is a very good hockey player and understands the game well but is lacking in size and strength. He is a little smaller than most and was very frustrated this year because his lack of strength on his skates and quickness hinder his ability to keep up with the play. I was wondering as a parent what kind of off-season conditioning or strength training we might be able to work on to help him develop his quickness and foot speed. I am thinking about purchasing an agility ladder and working with him on his foot speed. I am not sure if he should start strength training at his age, maybe just body weight or plyometrics. Any suggestions would be greatly appreciated.

Thanks,
Ron Deysher

Hi Ron

Thanks for your question.

Let me address a couple of concerns first and foremost. Many parents/coaches reading this will first say, a mite should not be training off the ice. They might say "it is too dangerous", "it will cause the player harm" or any other number of concerns.

Lets me state that training off the ice or strength training for a player this age will not cause any physical damage and will not cause harm to a player of this age from a physical standpoint.

With that said, my concern with a player at this age is this player mentally/emotionally ready to "train". Are they mature enough to "train off the ice" and will it "burn them out".

I have run programs for players in the past at this age. When putting together a program for kids this age it is important to make sure it is fun!!! I feel it is best to "train" with a friend or a group of friends. In this type of setting you can run relay races, games etc. This will allow the players to work on various aspects of athletic development without even realizing it.

Specifically in answer to your question Ron, let me say I think you are on the right path in regards to working on quick feet and speed. I love ladder drills, as the ladder is a great device to help develop quick feet and coordination. There are a ton of great drills for this device located in our member's only area of www.betterhockey.com

In answer to your concern regarding body weight exercises and or plyometrics, in my opinion these are both perfectly fine for your child to perform at this stage. I would keep your plyometric work to basic moves until he gains some strength. Again a list of exercises including pictures and video clips can be found in our member's only area of www.betterhockey.com

Most of all remember that he is only 8 years old. Go ahead and help him become a stronger skater and help him develop quick feet but do so by making it fun for him. Play various games with him and run contest with him and his friends.

Good luck.

Dr. Steele