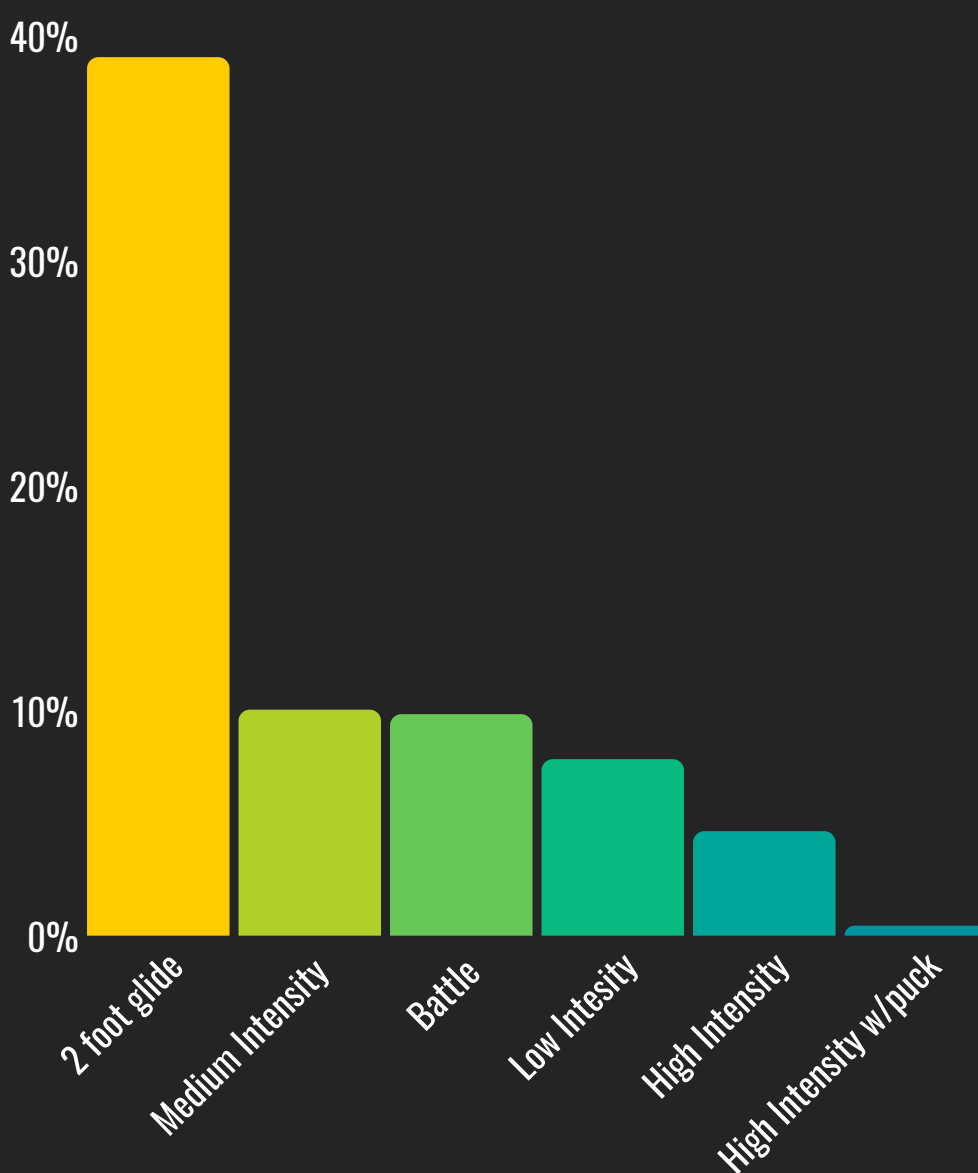


# SKATING: WHAT ACTUALLY HAPPENS IN A GAME?



## BRAKO ET. AL: NHL FORWARDS

"The results of the study indicate that NHL forwards spend the highest percentage of ice time, 39%, gliding on two feet, suggesting that this position is an important characteristic in hockey. It is important for hockey players to maintain balance on two feet while moving straight ahead, turning, and engaging in body and stick contact. Each of the other skating characteristics is derived from a two foot balance position. Body contact is initiated from a two-foot balance position."



**"THE TYPICAL BALANCE POSITION, WHILE GLIDING AND STATIONARY, IS FOR A PLAYER TO HAVE HIS OR HER SKATES POSITIONED SLIGHTLY WIDER THAN SHOULDER WIDTH APART, ANKLES DORSIFLEXED, KNEES FLEXED, TRUNK FLEXED, AND THE HOCKEY STICK CLOSE TO, BUT NOT ALWAYS ON, THE ICE"**

Studies like this should peak the interest of the performance team. The emerging kinematic data will begin to have an impact on our understanding of injury and reconditioning in our players as well as physical preparation strategies. By taking information like this into account, it is clear that one of the main components of the game is ISOMETRIC in nature. We often look at the groin complex as simply the break for the glutes to slow the leg down and return it to the glide phase. This is absolutely an important and demanding role for the groin. Even the concept of full recovery when sprinting opposes the balance required to be effective in the 2 foot glide aspect of the game and the plot thickens.

We have known for decades that the skating stride is very complex and the demands to the muscles are unique to the sport. Several attempts have been made to replicate the demands of skating in the gym. Some of the league's top performers have conceded to the fact that if they move better off the ice, they will likely move better on the ice when the time comes. Working out these technique issues on the ice may prove to have greater carryover and physical qualities can be the focus of office training (tissue and joint adaptation, capacity, readiness, and output.)

For some, this type of information is challenging and will be dismissed to dogma. For others, it will challenge their way of thinking and drive them to new solutions. We are in the frontier of hockey performance as it relates to monitoring and analytics. There are hundreds of really smart people out there digging deep into these numbers and trying to pull out relevant data points. Older studies can be reevaluated under new information and biomechanical studies can be filtered through the actual demands of the game. This type of information will trickle into nutrition, sport psychology, and recovery strategies.

#### **The Performance Team Concept:**

Technique coach identifies key performance limitations in player A. These issues are discussed with medical and physical prep staff. What are the key implements from each area that will support the changes we are looking for on the ice? Can their joints get into the positions required to be successful? Do they have the capacity to perform the optimal pattern for multiple repetitions? What is the impact of training these qualities on the CNS. How can we optimize output during the training of these qualities?

Make a plan , track relevant data points, rinse and repeat.

If you are a youth athlete and don't have a performance team surrounding you, check out our hockey performance program for a masters level education in finding your grind!



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