

Gather the Power

By Susan Ellis

To access the full potential for power in each stride, whether it be starts, straights, or corners, one must first bring the body towards a central point to gather the power. Power in skating comes from the core, especially the hips, and the closer you compact the entire body to the core, the more you increase the potential for power. This means bringing the shoulders, arms, knees, and skates as close to the midline of the body, and as compact as possible in the gathering process.

The photos below show how Trevor Marsicano brings his entire body in to the compact, tight position just before the push.



1 End of push

2 Recovery

3 Gather

4 Drive / Push

1. The end of the push finishes with the opening of the ankle and clap.
2. The recovery leg then swings to the back to begin aligning itself to drive directly under the midline of the body.
3. The recovery thigh now swings through very close to the other thigh, the shoulders and hips are compact and pressing down, the arms swing closely by the body. Everything is compacted toward a central point – the core.
4. Once the recovery knee passes the other knee it continues to drive up and forward, as close to the chest as possible, engaging all the core hip muscles that can be used in the delivery of force.

One of the reasons for his power is that he keeps the recovery knee thrusting straight under his body rather than driving it out and way from his body. This allows a longer load time on the pushing leg increasing his pressure in to the ice. It also allows time to fully engage the proper muscle groups around the core and hip area, to be used in the push.

Have a look at the video clip of the above sequence and watch how his whole body gathers toward the core.

Here is a sequence of Meng Wang (red) on a start. Again you will see her gather the power directly under her body, bringing it all to a central point, before releasing the power.



1. Knee recovers to a position under the hips.

2. Chest, shoulders, hips compact and pressing down. Knee drive through directly under chest.

3. Knee drives back out to land only at end of hip extension.

Watch the video sequence to see how Wang keeps her driving knee high under her body for as long as possible before thrusting it back out. She is pretty much at the end of her extension when the knee goes out, whereas the skater beside her (Kalyna Roberge) thrusts her knee out before fully gathering underneath. Notice too, the difference in the compact positions.



Looking at this picture on the lay in you can again see the compact position on Wang, pressing everything down, while bringing the knee in to be able to fully load the pushing hip. Watch the video of the Lay In to see the contrast of Wang's powerful lay in compared to Roberge.

Gathering the knee underneath in the compact position is a learned motor pattern best learned at slower speeds first or even off ice using Techni-Cords™, cables, or dryland imitations.

Happy Gathering!