Presscoopinchpushpinish

By Susan Ellis

The Presscoopinchpushpinish (press, scoop, pinch, push, p(f)inish) allows you to put more pressure in to the ice over a longer period of time, using the whole blade, to generate speed. Here's how it works:

1) Pressure in to the ice translates into speed. The more pressure you can put in, over the longest push, the faster you go. To put pressure in to the ice you must **press** your whole body in to your push.
2) **Scoop**ing your hips under you during the latter part of the recovery and thrust of the knee helps to start the pressure under the front part of the heel before moving to the ball of the foot.
3) **Pinch**ing in sideways through the pushing hip keeps the push going in a lateral direction and keeps the weight from moving forward to the ball of the foot too quickly, thereby keeping pressure on the blade longer.
4) Maintaining downward pressure directly over the blade keeps pressure in to the ice longer than just allowing your body to fall away from your push. This means that you must land your skate directly under you in order to press down in to it and continue pressing down through the **push**.
5) Your **finish** of push, ie; where the push finishes on the blade is determined by the speed you are going. At higher speeds the push will finish more towards the ball of the foot. At lower speeds the push will finish more towards mid-blade. (*Exception is right corner push which never finishes at the ball*)

These are not separate actions, but rather actions that flow together to lead into the whole movement. The press and scoop must work together to create the pinch, which starts the side fall to create an angle from which to push off the inside edge. But to explain them I will isolate each movement.

The press starts when your recovery leg has returned to a position behind you. Pressing means you are pressing you entire body down in to the ice while moving your hips forward. Your upper body compacts down towards your thighs which puts pressure on your pushing hip. This doesn't mean you are actually bobbing up and down, but at finish of push, there can be a very slight upward movement to allow your recovery knee to start to come through followed by a slight downward movement as your recovery knee drives forward under your body and you start your push. It's like you are sinking your entire body down and forward at the same time. One thing to be very careful of is that the downward motion is often confused with simply bending the knee to lower the hips. This actually moves your weight backwards rather than forwards. That's why the press has to be combined with the upper body compressing down and the hips scooping forward.

Jung Su Lee press Trevor Marsicano press

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The scoop of the hips starts as soon as your recovery knee starts its drive forward under you and continues right through to finish of push. The scoop is controlled by the lower abdominal muscles. It's like a pelvic tilt, pushing your pubic bone forward and up toward your chin. The scoop helps in keeping pressure back towards the front part of your heel to start your push and gives you more pressure time during the push. You have to be careful not to over scoop as this tends to lift your chest and move the pressure too far back on the blade. And you have to use your upper abdominal muscles to keep pressing (pulling) your chest down. Watch as Meng Wang (front) scoops her hips under her as she recovers her left through under her and pushes with her right. Contrast that now with the skater in 4th and you will see her hips do not come forward but rather stay where they are.

Wang scoop 1 Wang scoop 2

The pinch in of the pushing hip (NOT the recovery hip!) should start at the same time as the scoop. It's called a pinch because it feels like your side abdominal muscles under your rib cage and the muscles around the top of the hip are being pinched together. Pressing the shoulder down outside the pushing leg helps to get the pinch going as well as pressing through the top part of the thigh. You should feel tension building around the outside of the hip muscles as you scrunch the press, the scoop, and the pinch together.

Jung Su Lee pinch Shani Davis pinch

The Push

Once you have initiated the presscoopinch and gathered all of your power (see Gather the Power – April 2009) your push starts. At higher speeds your goal is to use every joint possible in the action of generating power. (It's one of the principles of motion.) This means extending from the hip, the knee and then the ankle. In doing this your pressure will move along the blade from heel to ball. At lower speeds it's not necessary to waste energy by extending the ankle as top speed is not the objective, so your pressure goes from heel to mid-blade.

In this top speed video watch how Wang takes the time to presscoopinchpush in to every stride. You will see how this gives her much more initial pressure than the other ladies. Watch the skater in fourth and you will see that her hips don't move forward at all and actually move back a little as she pushes.

Wang push

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