Forward Skating Checklist
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**Support Leg (Push Off)**

- The support leg is used to generate power during each push off
- This power is derived from full and vigorous sequential extension of the hip, the knee, and the ankle in a lateral thrust; and abduction of the hip (to the side not the back)
- The players hip should be abducted to approximately 30 degrees to allow for a sideways directed force
- The knee should reach full extension just prior to toe off
- The ankle (skate) should be angled to 45 degrees relative to the direction the player is skating during push off
- The players weight should be on the ball of their foot with the push coming from the inside edge of the blade (it is important to keep the blade in contact with the ice for as long as possible)
- From a lateral view, you should be able to draw an imaginary line from the ankle, up through the knee and hip, finishing the line through the shoulders and head (this line should be approximately 45 degrees)
- The player should have a significant amount of trunk forward lean (approx 50-60 degrees)
- Each push must be executed so that the thrusting leg pushes directly against the entire length of the blade
- Many players move their legs too fast and don’t allow them to reach full extension
- A deep knee bend allows you to push farther producing more speed
- As the number of strides increase, the player takes progressively longer strides pushing more to the side rather than to the back

Figure 1: Note the angle of trunk forward flexion of the trunk, the high degree of knee flexion and ankle dorsiflexion in the support leg, as well as the full extension in the right push off leg.
Recovery Leg

- The recovery leg begins as soon as the player has maximally extended their push off leg and begun to lift it off the ice.
- The recovery leg is brought back under the body through the motion of hip flexion and adduction, with the foot planting under the player's midline (the knee will be brought through the recovery ROM with very little change in angle once it overcomes inertial lag).
- A skilled skater will lift the recovery leg higher after the push off, and move it further toward the midline when planted; a less skilled skater will recover the skate with the blade very close to the ice and place it laterally relative to the midline.
- The players lower leg during recovery should reach a position of horizontal with the ice surface and result in high toe clearance.
- A common error in hockey skating is to plant the foot too far laterally and decrease the length of the push off phase.
- By placing the skate under the midline, it allows the player to complete a maximal weight transfer due to bringing their skate under their body weight, as opposed to bringing their body weight sideways over the skate.
- It is important to minimize the time the player spends in the glide, therefore, once the player has their weight over their plant foot the next push off should begin to occur.
- The player should have their plant leg knee located slightly in front of their skate (as a result of ankle dorsiflexion and knee flexion) in order to generate the next push off.
- The player should have a significant amount of trunk forward lean (approx 50-60 degrees).
- The recovery leg must not cross the midline at any point during the stride.

Figure 2: Note the high degree of knee flexion in the recovery leg as it is brought through parallel to the ice surface as well as the high degree of trunk forward flexion.
**Arm and Upper Body Action**

- When the player is pushing off with their left foot, their right shoulder should be abducting (with some flexion) to approx. 100 degrees and entering full extension at the elbow, while their left shoulder should be adducting towards the midline (without crossing it) and vice versa for the right push off skate
- The role of the arms in skating is to assist balance, and to increase the lateral ground reaction forces and produce greater lateral push off forces
- The peak arm swing speed should occur in mid range of the arm motion and in mid range of the push off phase
- The players upper body should be rotating slightly towards the support leg side to aid in weight transfer and to help keep the center of gravity over the base of support which is the single skate blade
- The head should remain stationary with little bobbing up and down; and only slight sideways movement

![Figure 3: Note the position of the trunk with a high degree of trunk rotation as well as the position of the foot at touchdown being directly under the midline (on the left) and the high degree of shoulder abduction at 113.3 degrees (on the right)](image)