

**The PUCK stops here;
When it comes to children's sports less may be more in the long run**

Scott Radley, The Hamilton Spectator
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No longer.

Today's high-level rep players can be skating five or six times a week while playing 60 to 80 games a season.

Then they start their summer hockey camps, summer leagues, practices and skating schools with little or no pause between. But that's a good thing, isn't it? Talented kids who concentrate on one activity have a better chance to become an elite player in that sport, anyway.

That's the theory. **But it may be completely wrong.**

A new study by York University researchers says **specializing a young child in one sport in hopes of becoming a star often has the opposite effect.**

Why? Because multi-sport children are more likely to become elite than athletes that focus on only one sport. That specialization often leads burned out kids to abandon all athletics by the time they're teenagers.

"It's really rare to find someone who specialized (and who made it),"

Says York assistant kinesiology and health sciences professor Joe Baker, whose eye-opening yet somewhat predictable study is being published in September.

In other words, science is now joining common sense in suggesting **too much of any one sport is bad for kids.**

The above article addresses the mental shortcomings of year - round skating/hockey, but the physiological problems of year - round hockey also produce negative results, such as over - training.

Over - training is when a player plateaus or stagnates in the sport, because he /she does not take time off and continually uses the same motor pattern of movement - skating - over and over.

Working "hard" or playing hockey all year is not working smart, at least for elite level players who are pursuing their personal best. Why don't Europeans and Russians play hockey all year?

Answer: They scientifically studied how to train. They found out that playing all year did NOT lead to players maximizing their potential.