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## CAN MORE SLEEP = NEW JUMPS?

Could a skater sleep her or his way to a new jump? Just ordinary sleep—without a pill or any special biofeedback device—could do wonders for athletes according to sleep experts. Dr. James Maas, a recipient of the American Psychological Association's Distinguished Educator Award, cites his work with a college track star at Cornell University in his interview in "USA TODAY" on November 29<sup>th</sup>, "...everything improved, including his running times." And the student is quoted as remarking, "I never knew what it was like to be awake before."

Dr. Maas was invited by the USFSA to speak at the Reach for the Stars Seminar at the U.S. Junior Nationals in December. "I want sleep to be as important on everybody's radar screen as nutrition and exercise," he told "USA TODAY"; and his colleagues are in complete agreement. In *Sleep Well, Sleep Deep*; Dr. Alex Lukeman states that studies indicate that teens still need ten hours of sleep a day "right up to about twenty years of age." Dr. Gary Zammit writes in *Good Nights*, "It seems likely, in fact, that older adolescents need even more sleep than pre-teens."

We know that teenagers don't want to hear that! Dr. Antonio Ambrogetti eloquently summarizes this plight in *Sleeping Soundly*: "Sleep requirement remains high in puberty but sleep needs are often not met because of social expectations and peer pressure." As a clinical lecturer in the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences at the University of Newcastle in Sydney, Australia, Dr. Ambrogetti realizes the peer pressure on pre-pubescent American children to be "on-line" at later hours. So Dr. Zammit suggests in his chapter "Too Cool To Sleep" that, "If your child is an athlete or values academic performance, it may help to talk about sleep as "powering up" for success.

But first, as coaches, we need to educate ourselves and our skaters' parents before we have that "power up" talk. And Dr. Lukeman warns, "There is a dangerous, hidden problem in America that affects every one of us...the problem is lack of sleep. More than a third of us don't get enough of it".

Dr. Maas reviewed the situation we experience everyday in the rink. "Too little sleep means kids are more likely to be forgetful,

angry, cranky. They're also more prone to injuries and making mistakes." (USA TODAY) He is releasing a video in January, which is aimed at teens and will be distributed nationwide by Simmons Mattress Company to high schools PTA's. The videotape, titled "Who Needs Sleep?", stresses how important sleep is for school and athletic performance. Experts on the tape encourage teens to manage their time better so they can get at least 9 + hours of sleep a night. There are two videotapes that his office does currently distribute (call 607/255-6266): a 1993 PBS special on the problems of sleep deprivation, "Sleep Alert"; and a 1998 documentary on how the lack of sleep causes accidents and poor performances, "Asleep in the Fast Lane: Our 24 Hour Society". Dr. Maas' book, "Power Sleep", has an appendix of 17 Internet sites that you and your student's parents could find helpful. Of the seven recently published books I reviewed for this article, I preferred "Sleep Well, Sleep Deep" for a simple explanation of the scientific aspects of sleep and for the most resourceful approach in providing solutions for sleep deprivation.

Until you can convince your students to get more sleep, perhaps you can help them wake up more fully—whether they are coming to the rink or going to school first. I recommend that my students jump on a rebounder before eating breakfast: 50 jumps and 50 runs for three sets. That should take less than five minutes. Eating breakfast is far more important, however. For individuals who just don't like to eat upon arising or don't have time, a nutritional shake sipped in the car on the way to skating or school is a good solution. If parents know they can help their kids get a new jump by sleeping more, I bet that those computers and televisions will be turned off sooner! ☺

### References:

- Good Nights* by Dr. Gary Zammit, 1997, ISBN: 0-8362-2188-5
- Power Sleep* by Dr. James Maas, 1999, ISBN: 0060977604
- Sleeping Soundly* by Dr. Antonio Ambrogetti, 2000, ISBN: 1-86508-372-0
- Sleep Well, Sleep Deep* by Dr. Alex Lukeman, 1999, ISBN: 0-87131-891-1