



Earn You Opportunity

When Ben Parker was a scrawny 16 years old he was playing minor hockey in Bowmanville (confirm) Ontario, with no delusions of a hockey future. He loved the game, he was a smart kid, a good athlete and a hard worker but his lanky body size did not bode well for a defenseman. A coincidental connection to current Whitby Twist Conditioning Coach, Todd Aitken, brought the two together and since that time his fortunes have quickly changed. Even before he became a key conditioning coach at the Twist Sport Conditioning Centre in Whitby Coach Aitken had been a longtime proponent of the Twist philosophies and training principles and was a certified Level 1 Twist Sport Conditioning Coach. Todd is a full time fireman but his passion for fitness and conditioning and his search for answers for his own training as a regular competitor in the World Firefighter Combat Challenge led him to adopt the principles of Twist training into his own regime and begin to impart these same principles as he embarked on a training program with Ben.



Ben had never done any formal training so building a strong foundation, developing proper movement patterns and teaching the work ethic necessary for success were critical first steps in the process. For the first 6 months the program focused on his weaknesses, training from the inside out to develop Smart Muscles™. Ben's athleticism, skating ability and hockey sense superseded his physical limitations. He caught the eye of the coach of the Junior C Port Perry Mojacks and was called up to help them out during their playoff run. He was invited back to their camp for the following spring and decided to fully dedicate his off season to training in order to come to camp as prepared as possible. Following Coach Aitken's training program Ben came to camp faster, stronger and with 10-15 pounds more muscle. His spring hockey camp plans took a sudden turn when rather than making the Junior C team he had trained so hard for, he ended up making the Junior A Bowmanville Eagles. As a rookie defenceman in the OPJHL, Ben had a lot of learning to do and his conditioning program continued through the season. His training with Coach Aitken continued and although they were able to be as creative as possible adding trail and track running into the mix, there were limitations in finding a training facility that allowed him to do the type of speed, agility, quickness and strength training necessary.



Coming into this year's training camp there was suddenly much more on the line than just making a Junior Hockey team. Ben had jumped onto the radar of many US college recruiters as well as the coaches of the Oshawa Generals and 2 other OHL team. This was an important opportunity to showcase himself for the U.S. scouts (6 Division 1 schools in total) that were actively recruiting him. This year there was much more at stake than just hockey. The dream of playing at a high level was suddenly an opportunity to turn athletic ability into an education and the prospect of being a student athlete with the chance to go to the U.S. on a hockey scholarship motivated Ben even more to maximize his results through the 2008 off season.



The Whitby Twist Sport Conditioning Centre had just opened in May and coach Aitken had recently taken a position as a conditioning coach at the facility. It seemed to be more than a coincidence that this was the perfect fit for Ben's off season conditioning program so in order to ramp up his efforts as he approached this critical season, he decided to add the **Twist High Performance Hockey Conditioning Camp** to his off season training plan. The Twist HP camp was developed by former NHL conditioning coach Peter Twist and has evolved into a hockey conditioning system that has re-shaped the way athletes train today. It focuses on training the secondary fitness characteristics: anaerobic energetics, dynamic balance, speed, agility, quickness, movement skills, muscle reactivity, reaction skills, multi joint strength and power, and other athletic attributes that has helped hundreds of NHL, Junior, College and minor hockey players become more skilful, and durable. This combination of training with Coach Aitken, the Twist HP Summer Conditioning camp, his dedication and work ethic, his passion for hockey and his focus on his objectives allowed Ben to recently receive a scholarship offer from NCAA Division 1 Canisius College for next year.



Ben is the epitome of the student athlete. With a high GPA and strong SAT scores, he is more than just a hockey player and there is no doubt that his dedication and commitment to hockey and to his conditioning will carry over to academics. The dream of playing in the NHL is certainly on the minds of every young hockey player. It is an achievable but difficult goal for most to attain. The objective of turning hockey into an educational opportunity allows for much more attainable options, but the same dedication and focus on the end result. Ben's story is the perfect example of how hard work, dedication and planning can help athletes achieve athletic success, and how this athletic success can lead to bigger and better things. Setting goals, progressing through an organized conditioning plan and working towards an end result are the cornerstones of a properly designed conditioning program. Coach Aitken was able to help guide Ben through the process but ultimately it is the athlete that has to decide what they want to achieve and where they want it to take them. The Twist Sport Conditioning Centre is dedicated to helping all of our athletes achieve their goals and to give them the tools to BE READY for whatever challenges they face.