

The Slingshot Pass

By Susan Ellis

Passing, especially at high speeds is a very difficult skill that requires planning, intuition, timing, power, and technique. There are so many different types of passes one can use, and so many different situations to use them in. The tip on The Inside Pass – January 2006 featured the inside pass, and the tip on The Outside Pass – February 2006 featured the outside pass. If you haven't read them I would suggest you do so now as the articles explain the basics of passing.

The slingshot pass is a highly effective pass because of the whip or slingshot effect you feel in your speed on the exit. On a normal track you punch through centrifugal force between the apex block and block 6. By going deeper down the track and wider you are able to punch through centrifugal force before the apex block allowing you to gain even more speed on the exit as you are no longer fighting centrifugal force by that point.

Notice how Ahn (in position 3) allows his right skate to track straighter longer than skaters 1 and 2, which puts him much deeper in to the corner and a little wider as well. He has, in essence changed his apex from middle of turn to entry of turn. Notice as well how he puts his upper body slightly in towards the turn to maximize the carving and pressure while pushing with his left skate. (See Transferring Power from Ball of Foot to Ice – The Ankle Snap – January 2007 for more on this.)

[Video of Ahn's slingshot pass](#)

In this next pass the pace has increased to maximum. Lee (3rd place) starts his acceleration on the previous exit by taking a wider exit than skater 1 and 2, accelerates hard down the straightaway, stays very wide and goes very deep, takes two hard crossovers in to the apex, and combines it with a hard pivot to slingshot himself in to second place. Cool!

[Video of Lee's slingshot pass](#)

The slingshot can also be used to pass outside on the exit if the inside lanes are blocked up. Smart skaters know when to change from plan A (inside) to plan B (outside). The pass is executed in the same fashion, but passing on the outside at the end of the corner rather than the inside. It is highly effective on the last turn coming in to the finish line because it is at that point that most skaters will guard against the inside pass, as it is the one most skaters tend to try on the last corner.