

Shooting gets personal

RapidShot gives marksmen a report card BY ADAM TRINH



WHEN IT COMES to playing hockey, no element is as important as shooting the puck. And when conventional training doesn't cut it, RapidShot provides a specifically designed system to improve your slapshot.

Based out of Ohio, RapidShot acts like a batting cage where pucks are passed to players to hit designated targets on a net. Points are awarded based on an algorithm that incorporates accuracy, speed and reaction time.

"What it does is it exposes your weaknesses," said Walter Payerl, the owner and president of RapidShot. "Through the data collection, it'll show you where your weakest corners are and you can go back and set that corner for your workout."

Players can calibrate personal settings tailored to the kind of workout they want.

"It has the ability to change the passing speed, the intervals in the passes, the target selection and the order of the target selection," Payerl said.

After a player is finished the 16 rounds of shots, his/her score is uploaded onto the RapidShot website where he/she is ranked into different age groups.

"For parents who are paying the kind of money these days for training, it's nice to actually get a report card after a period of time," Payerl said. "Scouts can actually have a prospect go into the local RapidShot center and shoot 400 or 500 pucks and be able to tell if the prospect is wired correctly."

With 23 systems set up in North America so far, Payerl says more retailers are putting them in their stores to allow custom-

ers to test hockey sticks before buying them.

"These synthetic sticks are costing, \$200, \$300 a piece," Payerl said. "For somebody to potentially make the mistake of buying the flex or wrong curve, they have the ability to really test it."

A man who knows a thing or two about shooting a puck, former NHLer Al Iafate has tried RapidShot and says the system simulates a real shot.

"One of the main features is that it's sending you a real puck," said Iafate. "You have to catch it, maintain a good shooting position then get rid of the puck quickly and hit the target with a good velocity."

After his first trial, Iafate admits he was surprised at his low score.

"The first time I tried it, how challenging it was, is what really peaked my interest," said the former Washington Capitals defenseman. "I gave it a try and saw how terrible my score was and I knew what my weakness was — shooting high. And obviously as an athlete you're going to keep playing till you're really good at it."

And that's exactly what RapidShot is there for,



GAME ON RapidShot's system doles out real pucks at different speeds to push a shooter's skills.