

# five on five

WOMEN'S FLAT TRACK ROLLER DERBY MAGAZINE

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**AUGUST 17-19**

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HOSTED BY KALAMAZOO DERBY DARLINS



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HOSTED BY BIRMINGHAM BLITZ DAMES



**AUGUST 31-SEPTEMBER 2**  
HOSTED BY AS BRIGANTIAS ROLLER DERBY



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**2018 WILL BE EPIC.**

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# five on five

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### WFTDA

Our WFTDA writer recaps the first ever public town hall between WFTDA, JRDA, and MRDA. This unprecedented gathering met to address the issues of harassment, abuse, and discrimination within the derby community. We also get a preview of the 2018 WFTDA Playoffs and Cups!

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### Camp Block and Roll

Held in Eatonville, WA and birthed in October of 2017, Camp Block and Roll aims to take you out into nature while honing your derby skills and related muscle groups through on-skates classes, yoga, and practice learning from game films, along with a host of other attractions and activities.

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### Official Behavior

How to most effectively learn from and mentor other officials through approach, tact, and mutual respect.

**editor**

phoenix aka stacey casebolt  
castle rock 'n' rollers

**art director**

assaultin' pepa  
rocky mountain roller girls

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swede hurt  
stockholm roller derby

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sylvia's wrath  
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nox  
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catholic cruel girl  
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*The views and opinions expressed in this publication are those of the contributing writers and do not necessarily reflect the views of fiveonfive magazine.*

# from the editor

## Welcome to the 40th issue of fiveonfive!

You won't be disappointed with this issue's fresh content and even fresh faces. That's right, Midge Mayhem of Denver Roller Derby is our fresh picked jammer advice columnist! So don't forget to come at us with those burning questions you've been struggling with or dying to ask. Between Midge Mayhem and Swede Hurt we've got you covered.

In this issue learn about Midge and Swede's biggest penalties and how they dealt with them. Then drag your laptop into the kitchen to whip up some delicious Avocado Spinach Dip to nosh on while you read the rest of the magazine.

We'll learn from the anonymous master of the DRD twitterverse how to engage and grow your twitter following as well as where to find the best derby tweets, and who to follow. We'll talk about derby burnout, how to fight it, and when to give in to the pull of temporary or permanent retirement with Nox of Arch Rival Roller Derby. Nox also gushes about the benefits of ramp/park skating, how it can up your game, improve your moves, and just simply make you kinda happy!

Quad Almighty talks bench strategy and the importance of a positive attitude on the bench. And afterward get a refresher on how to keep that mouthguard from turning into a science experiment on germ infestation. Sorry to be gross, but really, they can be pretty disgusting!

WFTDA talks about making derby a safer space for all at their first ever pubic town hall where they addressed harassment, abuse, and discrimination within the derby community.

There is more, as always including running junior derby practices, derby as fatal attraction, derby camps, and of course some good stuff for our favorite officials! Enjoy!

**Phoenix aka Stacey Casebolt**  
Castle Rock 'N' Rollers  
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# contributors

Many thanks to our contributors who come from all over the roller derby community and share their knowledge based on their countless hours of dedication to this sport! Check out additional contributors at [fiveonfivemag.com](http://fiveonfivemag.com).

## Midge Mayhem



Wilhelm aka "Midge" is a jammer for Denver Roller Derby's Mile High Club. Over her eight-year derby career, she's soaked up a wealth of knowledge from Olympic speed skaters, CrossFit coaches, teammates, and the internet. Midge has taken an interest in learning the importance of diet and off-skates training to help coordinate skating skill and derby training. By day, Midge is a software engineer for the Boulder-based company Green Chef. When she's not skating or working out, you can find Midge delving into a wide variety of activities from re-binding books to cycling around Denver.

## Nox

Nox is a derby content creator and skater with Arch Rival Roller Derby. In 2014 she began NoxTalks and started making videos about the sport, community, and culture of roller derby. In 2017 she began producing the Weekly Roundup of news and features from around the derbyverse and running the roller derby Facebook discussion group State of Skate. She is also launching Nox Skate Co, apparel and merch designed for the derbyverse, this summer! Find more at [NoxTalks.com](http://NoxTalks.com).



## Betty Ford Galaxy



Krista Williams aka Betty Ford Galaxy #12 steps, has been skating and coaching roller derby for over 14 years. She has been a huge advocate for junior roller derby and long derby careers. And she loves GLITTER!!!

Betty is a founding member of the Rat City Rollergirls, current skater for the Rainier Roller Girls, founder of the Seattle Derby Brats, and founder of the Littles.

## Professor Murder

Professor Murder has been involved in roller derby since 2006. He has been involved in over 400 games in that time, including WFTDA Playoffs and Championships from 2008-2015. In 2011, he was Tournament Head Referee of the WFTDA Championships. Starting in Cincinnati, he currently resides in Philadelphia, PA, and volunteers with Philly Roller Derby.



## Kim Gitzel



Kim Gitzel lives on the Big Island of Hawaii with her daughter, Grace, and their French Bulldog, Lulu. She is a Licensed Acupuncturist. Her quad loving history began back at the Lombard Roller Rink circa 1983, where she took artistic skate classes.

Unfortunately, her career ended before it began at the ripe old age of 9. Skip forward 27 years and she stumbled back onto skates from 2011 to 2014 ala The Paradise Rollergirls. Now, she and her daughter skate on their backyard miniramp (GloryAHHH!) and in her rollerdisco den.

*Expert advice  
from a jammer  
and blocker!*

*jammer*



**Midge Mayhem**  
Denver Roller Derby  
Denver, Colorado

*blocker*



**Swede Hurt**  
Stockholm Roller Derby  
Stockholm, Sweden



dear blocker and jammer,  
What was your biggest penalty and how did you fix it?  
-BOX BETTY

Gareth Bailey

*jammer*

dear BB,

I want to say my biggest penalty was either track cuts or back blocks. My awareness of what else was happening on the rest of the track usually escaped my eye. I just wanted to go fast!

I've worked hard on being aware of where skaters are on the track in relation to where I am, as well as my own self-awareness. Watching footage of myself is really difficult, but so necessary in understanding how I felt and thought I was moving in that moment versus how I actually moved. Self-awareness is key in helping understand how you're getting penalties.

Also, have your teammates help call you out on penalties at practices. Of course it doesn't feel great, but better to be accountable in practice than get that penalty in a game.

*blocker*

dear BB,

I really don't remember what my first big penalty was. I think that I've had different penalty issues each season depending on rules changes and different interpretations of the rules. In general the best advice I can give is to look at your penalties, and figure out WHAT it is that the officials see that you do, and just stop doing it. You will not win the battle "the official is wrong" you will just have to change what you do.

I know when I had a problem with forearm penalties, I asked my reffing friends what it was that they saw, and then I changed the position of how I skated with my arms. My forearm penalties dropped drastically.

So pretty much, recognize the penalty, analyze, and then adjust.



dear blocker and jammer,

Do you ever feel burned out on derby? If so, how do you deal with it?  
If not, how do you avoid it?

-FEELDA BURN

## *jammer*

dear FB,

Ah, the age old question. Yes, I have definitely felt burned out on derby.

When you're a newbie to roller derby, everything is exciting! You want other people to feel that same excitement so you sign up to help with everything under the sun. After a while you hit a wall: practices are no longer fun, skating is no longer fun, you're easily agitated, and on and on. It's usually not until I'm up in the middle of the night finishing a seemingly never-ending project because of course I couldn't say no to helping when I remember one key word: moderation. So simple and yet so difficult! Like all things good, moderation (or balance) is key in avoiding burnout.

Now, if you've already gone past the point of "I should scale back my involvement" to "I NEVER WANT TO SEE ANOTHER ROLLER SKATE IN MY LIFE" you have definitely reached the point of burnout. And this, my friend, can be difficult to overcome. The best way I've found to get over burnout is time. Usually my head is overrun with thoughts of all the administrative things I need to be doing. Add this to all of the things I want to work on as a skater, and I have completely deflated myself. The amount of time needed usually varies on how long I've tried to keep going while feeling burned out. A week, a month, a few months: whatever amount of time you need to take away until you find yourself missing that original love you had for roller derby.

## *blocker*

dear FB,

This is an interesting question, and I think it is an issue that needs to be talked more about in the roller derby community. We keep on being proud of being a DIY sport and at the same time we keep on having people quit, not because they don't love the playing the sport, but because the workloads get too heavy.

I completely burned out from derby in 2014 because of the combination of having a full time job with great responsibility and trying to do roller derby (practice, league work, coaching, and so on) 20-30 hours per week.

In the end I learned to say NO, and I had to learn that I can't do everything. It sucks having to say no, and even if you might be the most competent person for a task, it will not be successful if you already have too much to do. Leagues also have to be better to not to take on more than they can chew. If you don't have enough people for the amount of work you create, you need to ask yourself WHY and decide on what is important to get done, and what might just be flare. Delegate and share responsibilities, and have good documentation, to make it easier when people leave/can't continue for different reasons.

I also think that roller derby as a sport and community have to create a more forgiving and understanding environment, sometimes mistakes are made, and we can learn from our mistakes, but if every mistake is blown up, we will be scared and not revolutionary. We need to become better at recognizing each other's contributions and hard work. I do think it is important to plan in breaks, and those should be breaks from BOTH skating and league work, if we want longevity in the sport, we can't ALWAYS be working.



# derby twitter

ANONYMOUS, DENVER ROLLER DERBY

While Denver Roller Derby is known for its presence on the track, lately they've been making waves in the derby twitter community so we asked for their top tips in how to excel off the track in the derby social media world. While the shadowy figure behind the Denver Roller Derby (DRD) Twitter account wants to remain anonymous, they still have plenty to say in terms of utilizing social media as a roller derby league.

Social media throughout the world is growing by the second and roller derby leagues, like many businesses and brands, are trying to take advantage of that. Since taking over the DRD league Twitter in May 2017, the account has grown by hundreds of followers and even was awarded 2017 Best Roller Derby League Twitter by The Apex.

Since reemerging on Twitter with a new person behind the keyboard, Denver Roller Derby has seen a huge growth in social media engagement and interaction, which has led to new league fans and merchandise sold. This has caused many other leagues across the world to follow suit and up their Twitter game as well. If you're looking to do the same hopefully these tips will help you out. You can always follow @DNVRollerDerby for content ideas or just a good laugh.

Roller Derby Twitter, or sometimes referred to as RDTwitter, is primarily active during the big tournaments and playoffs/champs but many are trying to keep the conversations alive throughout the off season as well. First off you may be wondering who the heck can run a league twitter account and no the answer is not "just anyone with a phone". While yes the account can be run by a skater, official, or volunteer, it is imperative that the person running the account has enough time to interact weekly with the RDTwitter community and stay engaged with conversations. Make

sure when you are engaging on social media of any kind, especially Twitter, you interact with posts that are not just directly related to your team. Make sure to follow those accounts that are super active in the RDTwitter community so you can easily see or

find content to respond to. Often people will freak out when you interact or follow them from the team account, which is fun to see and be a part of. It makes you feel like a celebrity for a small second even though they have no idea who the person behind the league account is. I've had people stop Denver skaters on the street at Champs wondering who runs the league account because they love it so much.

While you are interacting, do not be afraid to retweet great points or mentions from other accounts. The retweets will show you are

paying attention to your audience and the RDTwitter community. Plus it's probably a point you have not thought of or they just said it better than you could. If you are ever struggling to find content, do a quick google search of the National Days (ie. National Ice Cream Day,

National Dog Day, etc.) and start there.

USE GIFS. Yes that deserved to be in all caps because it is that important. You do not have to use them as much as DRD does but they are "so hot right now" and there are tons of fun options out there to help make your point. Most of the surge in followers happened after I started utilizing GIFs to live tweet my reactions to games. My suggestion if you want to start using more GIFs in your RDTwitter is to get lost in the GIFs tab. Do some "research" and click through all the given themes. Search random words and phrases to see what gold mines of GIFs come up. I find it helpful to think

of scenarios you might want to tweet about during a game and find the appropriate GIF that could go along with it. Is your team

**Make sure when you are engaging on social media of any kind, especially Twitter, you interact with posts that are not just directly related to your team.**



**USE GIFS.**

**Yes that deserved to be in all caps because it is that important.**





Denver Roller Derby @DNVRR... · 2/4/18 ✓  
Now that #RDWC2018 is over...



getting too many penalties? How about a GIF of someone saying Stop That. Did you get lead jammer? Applause or celebration is in order so find a GIF for that. PRO TIP: When you find a GIF you like or want to use in the future click on it as if you were going to write the tweet. Then you can exit out of the started tweet and save it in your drafts. I did this when live tweeting Playoffs and Champs. I had around 20-25 GIFs saved in my drafts waiting for the perfect moment to use them. I didn't even get to them all so they are ready for the 2018 season!

You will see plenty of hashtags on twitter and clicking on a hashtag is a great way to find people to follow or content to engage with. Before you start using hashtags in your tweets make sure you research your hashtags. Seriously do it. You want to make sure your hashtag is geared towards the appropriate audience and is appropriate in general. Don't overdo your hashtag usage though. There is no need to hashtag on every single tweet unless it's playoffs or champs and you want to be part of the conversation. Stay consistent with the main hashtags you use. Denver always uses

#drdmvp (basically meaning everyone related or loving Denver Roller Derby is an MVP in our eyes and not just the skaters on the track). However, don't be afraid to create a new hashtag for yourself to utilize for a short period of time. For playoffs in Malmö last year we took our slogan "Derby with Altitude" and added in a little Swedish for fun! That then became our go to hashtag for playoffs along with the hashtag from WFTDA. Sometimes you'll even have others creating hashtags for you that catch on so embrace those as well.

Lastly, I often get asked how I so easily live tweet games and to be honest I live tweet from my bed. I have my phone plugged in (because you cannot have your phone die during mid live tweet) and have the live stream of the tournament or playoffs/champs on my computer. I did try to live tweet a game from a watch party but

there were too many distractions and I could not hear the announcers very well. Everyone will find their own way to live tweet successfully but remember the more GIFs the better!

Now off you go to try and snatch the Best Roller Derby League Twitter Award from my hands.★



# hangover cure products

SYLVIA'S WRATH, ROCKY MOUNTAIN ROLLERGIRLS

Roller derby and after parties. They go hand-in-hand, right? Even the most committed player can end up over-imbibing after a hard-fought win (or loss) and wind up with a nasty hangover to go along with their other various battle scars. And as I write this, RollerCon is a mere 49 days away.

RollerCon. Where the roller derby community gathers to walk the fine line between high-level athleticism and alcohol poisoning. The bouts, the costumes, the parties, the... raging hangovers? Not this year, my friends! Being the team player that I am, I have been diligently working to find the best hangover preventions and cures out there, only to share them here with you. I have mixed alcohols, done some day drinking, and even gotten drunk when I had to work in the morning, and all for you! The sacrifice has been great, but derby has taught me nothing if not sacrifice and perseverance. So, when you get that last-minute roster add after a long night, you'll be prepared, because I've done all the leg work for you!

Something you should know about your guinea pig: I am a social drinker. And I am VERY social. But I also suffer for my sins. It is well known in my circle that I do not function after a night of drinking. So when I undertook this task, there was a lot of interest. If something can help me avoid a hangover, it could probably reverse the aging process and possibly even improve liver function in the average human (statement not backed by any scientific proof). Basically, if it works for me, it works. Period. Read on to see what worked best...



## Morning Recovery ★★★★★

This was the biggest winner of the preventatives I tried, and I really put it to the test. I started at a Kentucky Derby party around 2 pm, drinking mint juleps. Sugar and whiskey is a surefire way to kickstart any hangover, but I really wanted to challenge the folks at Morning Recovery, so I kept it going by hitting a brewery for

a couple of beers later in the day. Follow that up with a couple of vodka presses, because at that point, I figured I should only drink clear liquor (the inebriated mind is so clever).

Fast forward to dinner, which included no less than two glasses of red wine. Now, this is an exceptional amount of drinking for me, and should have left me vomiting and bedridden the entire next day. But, right between the beers and the vodka, I managed to remember that I had a magical blue bottle of Morning Recovery. I opened it and took a sniff, not terrible. Slight peach flavor, not great, but definitely tolerable. I slammed it and kept going, sure that it would do very little to help after what I had done to myself. But I was so wrong! I woke up the next day feeling... wait for it... COMPLETELY FINE! At first I just assumed I was still drunk, but that wasn't it. This stuff really works! Even for me! I am in love with this stuff and am considering applying to be their spokesperson.



## Zaca Recovery ★★★★★

Zaca is not just for hangovers. The chewable supplement is designed to help replenish your body after travel or exercise, and help avoid altitude sickness when needed. But the all-natural ingredients do a great job eliminating the negative

effects of alcohol, too. I wasn't sure how I'd feel about a chewable, but it tasted just like a Sweet Tart. The company recommends taking two tablets while drinking and two after you are finished, but since I only had two, I took them towards the end of the evening. I probably had about 4-5 beers that night, which wouldn't level me the next day, but would leave me tired, headachey, and highly irritated by my sixth grade students. I was sure Zaca wouldn't be able to save me from this, especially since I only had two, but once again, I was pleasantly surprised when I woke up at the all-too-early time of 6 a.m. I was still a little tired, but nowhere near what I would've felt without it. This one seemed to be a winner, too, though I doubt it would stand up to the challenge I gave the Morning Recovery.

### Blowfish ★★★★★

This is the one I was most skeptical about. Blowfish is the only hangover "cure" I tried that is designed to be taken the next day after drinking. Personally, I prefer to be proactive, but again, I'm doing this in the name of science and the spirit of sacrifice for others (you're

welcome). I carried this one around for a while, figuring I'd "accidentally" have one too many at a happy hour gone long at some point. And, inevitably (well, maybe it wasn't actually inevitable), it happened. A few beers accompanied by a few more shots of Jameson, and I



woke up feeling like I'd been chewing dirty socks before bed. After some digging, I finally located the effervescent tablets in the bottom of my purse and threw them into a glass of water. I tossed the fizzy drink back, glad the lemon flavor was drinkable. Blowfish didn't get rid of my hangover, but it did lessen its effects. I made it to work and didn't even feel any murderous rage towards my more

boisterous morning class. Blowfish is basically a combination of aspirin, caffeine, and Alka-Seltzer, and I'm pretty sure I would get the same benefits had I just taken those items that were in my medicine cabinet. Though I will always prefer preventatives to remedies, Blowfish will do in a pinch.

### Drinkade Prevention ★★★★★

Drinkade, previously available as "Never Too Hungover," is similar to Morning Recovery. They recommend that you take it before drinking, and if you're drinking heavily, another before bed. They also offer two types: "Prevention" and "Boost." They are essentially the same, but Boost adds caffeine and double the B12. I tried the Prevention and took it midway through the night. I didn't get too crazy, but enough to feel it the next day. There are times when I go to bed and wake up in the middle of the night feeling pretty rough, only to be a little better in the morning. Not great, but not full on "stay-in-bed-with-a-trash-can" either. This would have been one of those minorly evil experiences without the Drinkade. When I rolled out of bed, I felt good. Not 100%, but decent. No nausea (which is the first thing I usually get), a very minor headache, and a little fatigue. I think it would have been worse without the lime-flavored drink, but it didn't have quite the stellar results that I got from Morning Recovery. I'd like to try the Boost next time. The added caffeine would likely wipe out what was left of my headache and give me that little burst of energy I needed to feel tip-top again.



So there you have it. My not-even-remotely-scientific experiments in hangover prevention, researched and tested for your benefit. So when you see me at the Westgate pool, buy me a drink for all my hard work. But if you see me collapsed in a corner next to a trash can, pour a Morning Recovery down my throat and lace up my skates. I'll be ready to play in no time!★



# five tips for preventing derby burnout

NOX, ARCH RIVAL ROLLER DERBY

**Derby can take your all. Whether you've been kicking your ass to pass your minimum skills or hustlin' on your A-team for years, we all can experience burnout.**

Burnout is more than stress. Stress is something we all deal with day-to-day, but burnout is when you're feeling overwhelmed, drained, stuck in a cycle of negative emotions. I think of it as a tank of gas. Stress is when the car may be struggling but still operational, "I wish I didn't have to go to practice tonight". Burnout is when I am out of gas, stuck, and feeling kinda helpless or lost, "I DREAD going to practice."

I had a pretty intense bout of burnout at the end of last season. In October my team Arch Rival Roller Derby's Saint Lunachix competed at B-Champs in Florida. By now this was our fourth travel trip of the year. Our seventh, eighth, ninth, and tenth games of the year. My seventh season of derby. I was tired, out of gas, and it showed.

I forced myself to go to practices, the gym, team bonding, everything. I'd let my physical and mental health deteriorate all season to keep up and keep pushing myself. I did it all for B-Champs and, of course, I didn't perform my best, I aggravated an injury and had an incredibly stressful time trying to manage my health while away. Looking back, I can see so many points leading up to that where I should have taken a step back, a few things I could have done to help myself before it was too late.

It's important to take care of yourself before things get to such a boiling point. You don't want to get to your Championship weekend and not have the energy for it.

Here are a few things you can do BEFORE you get burnt out:

## take a look at your goals

I found that part of my burnout came from pushing so hard to be as good as these new phenomenal teammates of mine. The only 'goal' in my mind was to be able to hang without looking like a doof.

This led me to constantly comparing myself to these new teammates in every way, which is not only a confidence killer, but not having a plan or a dedicated goal I was striving to crush made me feel overwhelmed, anxious, and pretty crappy about myself.

Every practice, every drill, my head was full of the ways I paled in comparison and I couldn't focus on actually getting better. Finding specific things to work on (lateral movement, keeping arms down when backwards blocking, preventing star passes, etc) and being happy with progressing and tracking myself.

**Making, tracking and crushing your goals not only helps you improve your skills but it's also a huge confidence boost!**

Making, tracking, and crushing your goals not only helps you improve your skills but it's also a huge confidence boost! Knowing I've reached goals I never thought I could, and seeing the amount of work and progress it takes to get there helped me find a game plan for 'getting better', which feels much less overwhelming and draining!

## do less

We do A LOT when we are involved in derby. Most leagues require committee work, high practice attendance, and volunteer hours. Most derby folks do even more than those basic requirements and stretch themselves thin for their league. If that sounds like you, consider taking some things off your plate. Assess your commitments and find

**Assess your commitments and find something to drop or delegate.**

something to drop or delegate. Your personal health and happiness is more important than those flyers being perfect or making every practice, etc.

### **find the magic again**

When you're burnt out, it can be hard to see why you keep giving your all.

I have found that engaging with derby in different ways helped me find that magic again. I started skating Chicks in Bowls style which has opened a whole new world of skating to me and I have found (as you can read about on page 14), it has really helped evolve my derby skating.

You could also try a new role! Depending on your type of burnout (i.e., if you're that person that is doing way too much, maybe skip this one?) finding a new way to connect with derby can make a huge difference. Announcing, coaching, officiating, blogging, there are a ton of ways to be involved, try something new! You'll be amazed at a) how much fun the non-skating derby roles are and b) how much it can improve your game on skates!

### **derby with different people**

Sometimes meeting new people, learning new things, doing things differently is enough to shake things up! Visit a neighboring league, hit up a bootcamp or get to RollerCon if you can! You'll be amazed at how many different styles, strategies and people you can meet and how refreshing that can be!

**If you're struggling with burnout that comes from plateauing, go get your ass kicked!**

If you're struggling with burnout that comes from plateauing, go get your ass kicked! I was once a big fish in a small pond. This led to me being bored, coasting, and getting even more bored. I decided to go scrimmage with the St. Louis Gatekeepers. For reference, I am a tiny 5'1" blocker, so needless to say it was a rough night for me. This type of pseudo-masochism showed me what I needed to work on and inspired me to grind to the next level. Nothing will light a fire

**...finding a new way to connect with derby can make a huge difference.**

under my ass more than 'sink or swim' moment. If that's your thing, too, go get it! Go swim with the big fish in the big pond!

And, if you're experiencing burnout for a league-specific reason (too much responsibility, drama, practice schedule) this is a good time to look to derby with other people and maybe find a better fit!

### **take breaks**

Sometimes we think that since our league is DIY, and we each hold a lot of responsibilities (committee work, volunteer hours, cross-training, attendance requirements), it can be hard to feel comfortable taking breaks, even when you need it. It can also sometimes feel like you'll lose your spot, on the team or in your derby circle, if you take time off.

But, as hard as it is, taking breaks is what will keep your derby career going strong. Resting your brain and body are vital parts of being an athlete. Plus, you'll enjoy derby more when it doesn't feel like a life-suck.

Please, as someone who pushed herself far too hard for far too long, TAKE BREAKS. Derby will be here if/when you get back.

### **decide if you're still into this**

After I told a good friend how hard it was for me to get myself to practice (and how hard I sometimes tried to find ANY excuse out of it), she told me that as long as I was leaving happier than I entered, then I was okay.

"The real thing you need to worry about is when you leave less happy than when you came in". So far, that has been a good barometer for me. I still find myself leaving practice with a smile most days, even when I feel like kicking and screaming all the way there sometimes.

If you are dreading going to practice or events, and don't feel any better afterwards, it's time to think about how much you're putting into it. It may be time to move on to your next adventure!★

**But, as hard as it is, taking breaks is what will keep your derby career going strong. Resting your brain and body are vital parts of being an athlete.**

# Avocado Spinach Dip

CATHOLIC CRUEL GIRL, ROCKY MOUNTAIN ROLLERGIRLS



xxobella.com



# Avocado Spinach Dip

CATHOLIC CRUEL GIRL, ROCKY MOUNTAIN ROLLERGIRLS

*Bright and flavorful avocado spinach dip,  
because, c'mon, aren't you bored with hummus?  
This dip is tangy, creamy and refreshing  
with just the right amount of zip.*

## **ingredients:**

4 cups spinach leaves  
1 large avocado  
½ teaspoon fresh lemon juice  
Large pinch of salt  
1 clove garlic  
¼ teaspoon curry powder  
1/8 teaspoon fresh minced ginger  
Pinch of cayenne pepper  
Pinch of chili powder  
Pinch of cumin powder

Place all ingredients in a high power blender or food processor and whirl until smooth. Serve with veggies of all colors.

# ramp/park skating can improve your derby game

NOX, ARCH RIVAL ROLLER DERBY  
PHOTOS BY ETHAN WESTON

My good friend and teammate refuses to go to the skatepark with me because, in her words, “you need to be willing to eat shit” and she just isn’t willing to eat shit.

And, honestly, she’s kind of right. Going to the skatepark requires a bit of daring, but most great things in life do. I mean, let’s take a moment to think about the fantastical, kind of dangerous game we all love! I’m sure the same logic could be, and often is, applied to roller derby. But there is so much to be gained from ramp/park skating. Not only is it a super fun thing to do on skates, but it can actually improve your derby game.

I started ramp skating late last year and have already seen huge improvements on the track. My footwork, upper and lower body strength, endurance, and confidence have all been impacted by having fun at the skatepark with my friends. Following are a few reasons why you should hit up your local skate park asap.

## cross training

Remember when you started derby and you found all those muscles you’d never used before? Get ready for Part 2! Ramp skating is so much fun but, as with any other sport, it’s extremely physical. You’re gonna feel all kinds of sore and tired even from doing the most basic skills. Just

pumping\* for a minute will challenge your stance, leg loading, and balance!

When you’re just starting out, just doing the most basic skills will leave you winded and SORE. And even once you master those pumping muscles there are a ton of ways to gain endurance, muscle, and stamina.

## toe-stops

You may not expect to use your toe-stops so much at a skatepark, but they’re a necessary tool there as much as they are on the track. You’ll use them a ton just getting around the park (especially if they’re as ‘industrial’ as some of the parks in St. Louis) and especially for getting up (and sometimes down) all types of ramps and mounds.

There are also a ton of tricks to be done on your toe-stops! Toe-stop stalls\* are a great trick to learn before conquering the coping\* and can help your overall toe-stop skills. After getting comfortable doing toe-stop tricks on ramps I felt so much more comfortable doing them on the track. Suddenly I felt like a jammer, comfortable skirting lines, lateral hopping and juking on my toe-stops. It feels breeze when you’re not trying to fly into the air (and trying to safely drop back to earth!).





### track awareness

You know when you go to your local public skate and there are a ton of children on wheels zooming around and falling down in front of you? Keeping an intense side eye on the kids that come near you to avoid a collision? I mean really though, it's rough at the public skate. But picture those kids flying in from above you, around you, at high speeds, and they aren't checking for you either. That's going to a skate park.

For the most part, skateparks are populated by young men and children. While the teenagers are usually good about obeying skate park rules, the kids... not so much. Unfortunately, they are just like kids in all other context – they don't look out for shit. There have been hundreds of times me or my Chicks in Bowls St Louis (CIBSTL) friends have barely escaped death by flying scooter because our overall awareness has been heightened – for dear survival. You'll be amazed at what a few trips to the skate park will do for your awareness on the track!

### confidence

Ask almost any derby/ramp skater you know, ramp skating will make you MUCH braver in roller derby! After you've conquered roller skating tricks on steep inclines/declines, doing almost ANYTHING on the flat track seems easier! I feel so much more willing to try new things, too. Jammer footwork that used to terrify me now sounds like a fun challenge, any type of jumping feels like nothing when I'm

not doing it while going up a huge ramp! I've found myself feeling so confident in my strength and agility I almost want to start jamming. ALMOST! #blockerforlife

I've also really loved how, like derby, skating Chicks in Bowls style has taught me a lot about owning my space. Skateparks often are full of men, which can be uncomfortable and intimidating for the lone skater girl (or non-cis dude). Fighting for space in skateparks has also helped me fight for space in derby – on and off the track.

### skate magic

One of my favorite things about hitting the skatepark with my CIBSTL gang is that there is no competition. We get together and work on things independently, help each other, teach each other new things. No rosters to make, no opponents to worry about, no pressure – just learning new things on your time.

I get to decide what I want to learn, what to work on, when I go skate, etc. That freedom really helped me find my love of skating again, which has kept me passionate and intense about derby.

Honestly, I wish I'd discovered ramp skating sooner in my derby career. There are so many elements to my game that are stronger now that I have these skills in my toolbox, and the confidence that comes from doing another ridiculously physical sport. If you're looking for a new way to up your derby game or just a fun new thing to do, grab some friends and hit the skatepark.★

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**\*tricktionary definitions: [chicksinbowls.com/tricktionary](http://chicksinbowls.com/tricktionary)**

**For a basic ramp skating guide, check out Chicks in Bowls Youtube!**

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# bench management

QUAD ALMIGHTY, CINCINNATI ROLLERGIRLS

In derby, a “typical” game does not exist. Nevertheless, teams have to find ways to make consistent effort and execution a reality on the track. The bench is an important place to start improving your team’s performance.

During a game you may find yourself riding the bench most of the time. Even a team’s best players will typically play in not more than half the jams of a typical game... typically. All that time you spend on the bench is precious. If everyone together puts in the effort to make it a positive part of your team’s strategy, the bench can be a magical place. However, it can also be a total disaster since one negative influence can upset the apple cart. A few simple things can make your bench a place of positive energy, cohesion, and constructive organization that will translate into better execution on the track.

## positive energy

First and foremost, the bench has to be a positive place where teams soak up positive energy. Energy – positive or negative – is a current that moves from body to body just like electricity. Adrenaline and training can go a long way, but a jolt of enthusiasm and determination makes all the difference

when your team is tested on the track. Positive voices and attitudes are constructive and create energy. Negative voices and attitudes are destructive, sap energy, and can have disastrous consequences well beyond a single game.

Your own attitude on the bench is affecting everyone around you. Somebody is loudly complaining about all the back blocks, about the refs, or about their playtime. Somebody is bemoaning their inability to move opposing blockers out of the way or to stop opposing jammers. “When will the grand-slam-fest finally end?!? The End is Nigh – Repent!” People around that voice of doom may or may not agree but one thing is for sure: everyone on the bench is losing valuable energy. Negativity saps your whole team’s energy and it can turn a single bad jam into a bad game.



Jeff Savier

Rid your bench of all negative energy! Don’t pout. Say positive things. Use positive words. Avoid criticism, even self-criticism. Your whole bench’s energy is your personal responsibility, whether you spend one jam on the bench or all but one. Be sure you are having a positive effect



Jeff Savier

on your team. 100% positive energy, 100% of the time. That positive energy will translate into more confidence and better teamwork for everyone both on and off the track.

## sincere praise

All athletes benefit from positive reinforcement as a means of motivation. It’s critical that teammates build each other up with praise and accolades for a job well done while on the bench. “That juke was sick!” “Thank you for getting that pivot out of my way.” “You totally shut that jammer down.” “Great hit!” “You are on FIRE!” All athletes need to hear these things. A quick pat on the back can spark a charge of great execution and give your team momentum-building energy. Keep in mind, though, it has to be sincere and it has to be consistent.

There are two common errors teams can make with their praise. First, teammates might only congratulate the BIG things. There are plenty of common but impactful actions that go unheralded. Victory is in those details. Be sure your team encourages them. Watch the game carefully – look for reasons to commend your teammates. It’s no small advantage to have fourteen players all laser-focused on the pack.



Jeff Sevier



Jason Bechtel



Jeff Sevier

Secondly, teammates can take the “best” players on their team for granted. Everyone needs encouragement, even a superstar. Be sure you divvy out accolades evenly and consistently. We often come to expect our best players to make big play after big play, but even those superstars need to hear their teammates’ appreciation. Everyone needs the love, from your superstars to your greenest rookies – let them hear it!

### line-ups

You’ve got Sharks, Wrecking Balls, Trailers, B1s, B2s, B3s, Swings, Floaters, Outside Fronts, Inside Backs, Lions and Tigers and Bears. Oh my. (If anything, derby is great at making up names for the three blockers who line up behind the pivot.) You’ve got rookies, veterans, hot players, cold players, dedicated jammers, twisted ankles, and broken toe stops. Keeping this menagerie organized can be tough. Figuring out who you need on the track when naughty wall-busters start filling up the penalty box can be downright overwhelming. You need a system.

All good teams have a system for calling line-ups (or packs or positions or packages, etc.). Whatever you call them, it’s important that your team has a consistent and effective system that

eliminates confusion about who is supposed to be out on the track next. A chaotic bench is a typical source of frustration and little else will sap a team’s energy quite so effectively as the confusion and disorganization associated with calling line-ups. Players need to know as soon as possible who is supposed to be on the track and what positions to play. A good system avoids weak packs and minimizes the impact of minor penalties in your line-ups.

My team uses a numbering system of player priority. We mark our benches 1-4 and J. Seat J is for the Jammer, of course. The numbers are blocker priority. Seat 1 is the highest priority player; so the player in seat 1 will always go in the next jam, regardless of position or situation. Seat 2 is the second highest priority. Seat 4 is the lowest priority.

So, if there is one blocker in the penalty box, then the player in Seat 4 will not go in the jam, because she is the lowest priority – players in Seats



Jason Bechtel

1-3 will go in, because they are the highest priority. (Remember, the fourth blocker in that pack is starting in the penalty box.) If two blockers are starting in the penalty box, then the players in Seats 1 and 2 (highest priority) will go in, but the players in Seats 3 and 4 (lowest priority) will not.

It’s up to the bench coach to set the priority. And, it’s important that there is only ONE person who calls line-ups. Too many voices can create massive confusion and frustration. Generally, I want my most effective, better blockers in Seat 1 and Seat 2; that way, if it’s a short, two-person pack, I know I have my best possible pack on the track. If someone is sitting on three minors, though, I might want to move them down to Seat 3 or Seat 4. If I have a pair of skaters that I need to work together for some goal in the next jam, then I put them in Seat 1 and Seat 2 and keep them together, and so on. This is easy to manage. I simply point at a player, look her in the eye and say “One,” or “Two,” etc. As soon as a player’s number is called, she goes to sit in that seat and waits for her packmates.

It’s important that this happens quickly. The next pack should be set as soon as possible. There’s nothing worse than trying to figure out who is missing seconds before the pack start whistle is about to blow; that is, other



than watching the head ref send your best blocker back to the bench and skating short during a power jam because you fielded too many blockers. First things first: get your line-up called, then worry about the rest.

We sometimes have “set” line-ups, like a script, based on personnel and the game plan. Usually in a half, there are about 18 jams. We set no more than nine line-ups, and rarely get through all nine unscathed before penalties or other factors change the plan. It’s important not to be too dead-set on that original script. Players get hot and cold and circumstances sometimes call for radical changes. Our system allows for improvisation based on what’s happening at any given moment in a game. I simply set the clipboard down and start prioritizing players and positions.

### a good plan

Before they go in to play, it’s extremely important that the next line-up watches the current jam together. They can talk about what they want to do as a group and what needs to be accomplished. The jammer can tell the blockers which opposing players to focus on and which players they can ignore. Blockers can decide how they want to manage different scenarios: slow the pack down, speed it up, lock down the front, discombobulate the back, isolate the weakest blocker, distract the best blocker, etc. You will find that nothing improves teamwork like talking about the next jam immediately before it happens. That planning will also improve execution, because every player is clear about what needs to happen and what their



Jeff Savier

role is in the next jam. Focus, grasshopper.

Your bench can work to your advantage and give you a jump on your competition. It’s not a waiting room. It’s not a peanut gallery. It’s a pit stop for finely-tuned, electric derby machines. It’s the war room, where attacks and counter-attacks are carefully planned. One thing about derby is simple: you are either acting or reacting. If your team is dictating the action, then you are winning. If your team is constantly reacting, then your team is losing. It’s that simple. Have a plan. Dictate the action. The place to create the positive energy it takes to execute a good plan and take positive action to the track is the place where you spend most of your time during a game.

### caveat emptor

If you’ve ever seen me or my cohort, Pale Rider, roaming the bench during a game – or if you’ve had the distinct privilege of officiating one of our games –

you’re probably aware that I can be an impassioned nutbag sometimes. (I love Refs and NSOs. I really do. I would hug each of them individually in line if given the opportunity. Really. They deserve WAY more hugs.) Our players know that Pale Rider and I are going to yell and jump and carry on; and they know why we do it. For the most part, they do not let it affect their energy (other than that it frequently gives them a good laugh at our expense).

We keep these things compartmentalized and we keep the lines of communication open. If our nutbaggery is detracting from the positive energy of our bench, we calm down, explain why we’re acting like crazy buffoons, change tactics, or stop completely and re-focus our attention. By any means, all of us strive to keep the positive energy flowing on our bench all the time. It’s a powerful tool that has drastically changed for the better how our team plays and communicates.

Derby gets intense. It’s not always rainbows and unicorns, certainly. Tensions can run high. Crisis happens. Occasionally, the end actually is NIGH. The most important thing to remember – whether you’re a player, official, coach or fan – is that all players, officials, coaches and fans deserve your respect. Nowhere is that more important than your own bench. Be good. Be respectful. Master that concept and most everything else magically falls into place.★



Jason Bechtel



## warmup drills

drill courtesy of interderby.wordpress.com

**purpose:** get warmed up and ready to play derby

### follow the leader

Break up into groups of three or four. Have skaters skate in lines or small packs, and designate a leader. Every skater in the line or pack must do exactly what the leader says or does (for a maximum of two minutes). After two minutes, the leader picks a new leader. Keep going until everyone has been leader once.

### pack drill

Have skaters start skating at a moderate pack pace. Once the pace is set, three girls fall at the jammer line, and must pop back up and get through the pack to the front. Each person in the pack must work to block the three skaters. Skaters can give no more than two blocks. After they have given their two blocks, they can try to help to get the skaters through (without blocking the other pack members (they can whip or push or guide them through)).

### squat drill

Set a time limit for this drill (usually around 20 minutes). Have skaters start skating around the track (doesn't have to be pack formation). Coach yells out different commands such as "right knee drop" "four point fall" "block the girl next to you". Once you get to the middle of the time, on one straight away take three strides (and hold skater form) and on the next straight away sprint. You can have skaters do anything... squat drills can be different each time. Throw in a few two-minute sprints; throw in things to help with balance. It's like picking from a list of your favorite techniques, and making the skaters do it in a drill. You can even throw in push-ups and sit-ups!



Ingrid Barrentine, Northwest Guardian staff



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# cleaning your mouthguard

Did you know that the average hand harbours 150 unique species of bacteria? While some of those are microbes (good bacteria), 80% of communicable diseases are transferred by touch. Every time you use your hand to take out your mouthguard, those germs jump on for the ride. Throw a sickness in the mix and your dirty mouthguard will make sure you stay in bed all season.



Germ thrive best in warm, dark and moist environments like where your mouthguard lives: in your sports bag, sports bra or even your sock. Your mouthguard provides the ultimate habitat for bacteria. This is why it's important to clean, dry, and store your mouthguard properly after every use. Here are some easy ways to sanitize and take care of your mouthguard:

## toothbrush

Using a non-abrasive toothpaste and a soft bristle toothbrush, give your mouthguard a good brush then rinse.

## hydrogen peroxide

Disinfect thoroughly using 3% hydrogen peroxide. Flush or soak the guard with the solution for no more than ten minutes.

## soap and water

Simply washing your mouthguard with anti-bacterial soap will help keep bacteria at bay.

## mouthguard cleaners

There are non-alcohol based cleaners that are specifically formulated for cleaning your mouthguard. You can easily sanitize your guard with one soak.



#### store it

Don't throw your mouthguard in your practice bag with your skates and sweaty socks. When you're done with your mouthguard, store it in a ventilated case.

#### leave it in your mouth

The less you have to use your hands to remove the guard, the smaller chance you have of getting sick from the bacteria on your hands. If find yourself removing your mouthguard every time you need to talk or drink, consider getting a custom fit mouthguard. If you already have a SISU or a custom fit mouthguard and you still find yourself taking it out to drink or talk, check your fit. You might need an adjustment or remold.

#### how to keep a white mouthguard looking white

White is the color of choice for roller derby mouthguards. The only downside is that they absorb color very easily so they don't stay white for long. This happens when you drink colored drinks, eat food, or wear bright lipstick before or while wearing the guard. Unfortunately, once it's stained there is no going back. The best you can do is buy a new one and take care of it going forward. You should replace your mouthguard at least once per year anyway. They can get gross and most come with a dental warranty that is only good for one year.

#### do not:

- Soak your guard overnight.
- Use isopropyl (rubbing) alcohol or alcohol based cleaning agents.
- Use hand sanitizer, dish soap, bleach or denture tablets.
- Put it in the dishwasher.

Cleaning your mouthguard can be a pain and is probably the last thing you want to think about after a game or when you're rushing to practice. Once you make it a part of your routine, it will be a breeze and your body will thank you.★



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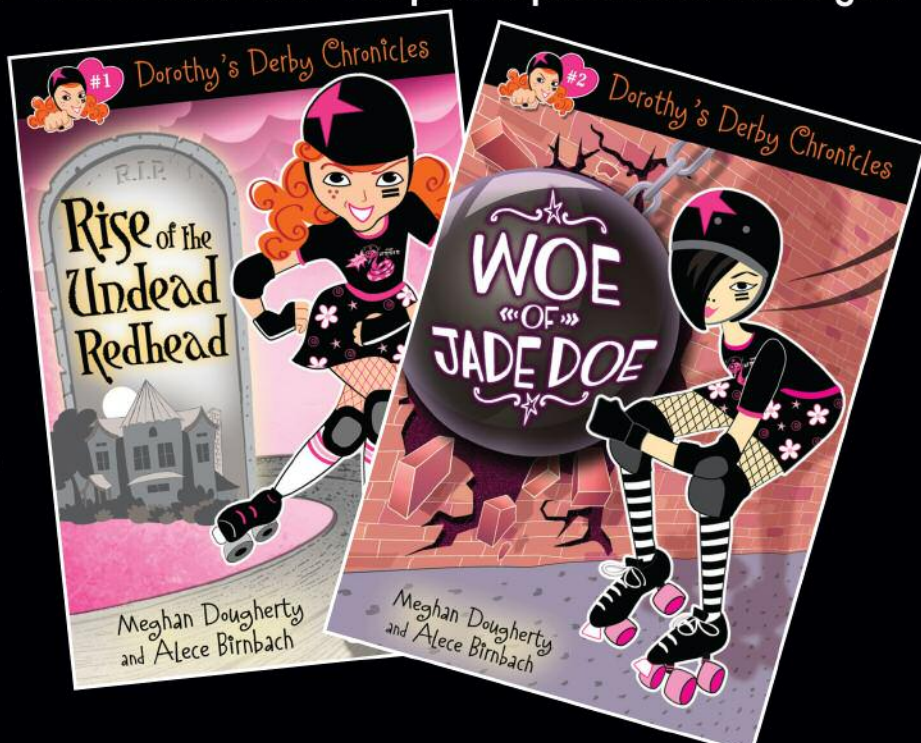
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Dorothy Moore has never been outgoing. In fact, she’s downright shy. So when she and her sister Sam are forced to move in with their pink-haired, hearse-driving grandma, Dorothy’s not sure she can survive as the new kid in school. Skating as The Undead Redhead with her team Slugs & Hisses, Dorothy and her mismatched crew stumble their way to the track and championship in this wild ride for kids ages 8-12.

Check it out at [dorothysderby.com](http://dorothysderby.com). Ask for it at your independent book store, or buy it at Barnes & Noble or Amazon.



# WFTDA public town hall recap

THE WOMEN'S FLAT TRACK DERBY ASSOCIATION

## making roller derby a safer space

On April 29, the WFTDA partnered with JRDA and MRDA to host our first ever public town hall on issues related to harassment, abuse, and discrimination in roller derby in order to discuss steps that can be taken across all three organizations. The town hall was open to the wider roller derby community, who was invited to submit questions beforehand.

The WFTDA outlined ways in which it intends to guide changes in roller derby, calling for a community-wide examination of our cultural practices, our policies, and our grievance processes. Action steps include building and launching materials to support anti-abuse, anti-harassment, and anti-discrimination; examining existing grievance processes and creating new procedures; and making policy-based changes to build accountability on an organizational and local level and fight systems of oppression. The town hall also emphasized the importance of receiving feedback from the community.

**“We are in a major time of change in our culture in which it has become increasingly important to step in and really amplify the voices of those who have felt marginalized in the roller derby community.”**

“We are in a major time of change in our culture in which it has become increasingly important to step in and really amplify the voices of those who have felt marginalized in the roller derby community,” said WFTDA Vice-President F-Bomb.

To make our sport safer and more inclusive, it is essential to believe, support, and protect survivors on both an organizational and local level, to hold ourselves accountable, and to center the experiences of marginalized communities. Together, the WFTDA, JRDA and MRDA are working to keep abusers out of the community and this conversation is a crucial first step.

Following the town hall, the WFTDA and JRDA have signed a two-year agreement

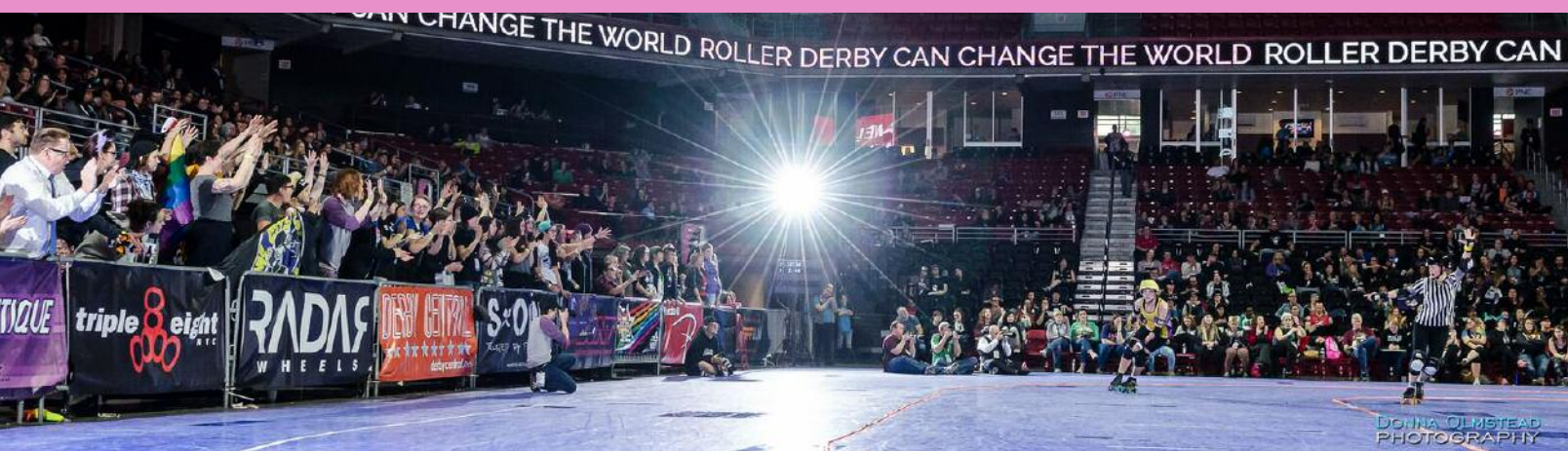
to collaborate on anti-abuse, anti-harassment, anti-discrimination, and anti-bullying initiatives and policies.

More town halls have been planned for 2018 for WFTDA members on topics of racism and marginalization and anti-bullying.



Listen to the full recording at:  
**[wftda.com/anti-abuse-public-town-hall-recording](http://wftda.com/anti-abuse-public-town-hall-recording)**





DONNA OLMSTEAD  
PHOTOGRAPHY

# 2018 tournament preview

THE WOMEN'S FLAT TRACK DERBY ASSOCIATION

## WFTDA 2018 playoffs and cups

Tournament season is upon us and this year brings some exciting changes. A new tournament structure will be implemented this year, with two International WFTDA Playoffs and one Championship. Following the June WFTDA rankings announcement, the top four teams will receive a bye for Champs. Teams 5-28 will receive invitations for Playoffs and, as always, team seedings will be determined by an S-curve, with twelve teams participating in each Playoff.

A Coruña's As Brigantias, a small but ambitious WFTDA Apprentice league from northern Spain, will kick off the tournament season with the

first International WFTDA Playoffs of 2018, from August 31 to September 2. Next, the Atlanta Rollergirls will welcome the roller derby community to their city on September 21-23. The top four finishers from each Playoff will advance to Champs, where a total of 12 teams will battle for the Hydra in New Orleans, Louisiana, hosted by the Big Easy Rollergirls, on November 9-11.

While Division 2 Playoffs have been removed from the structure, this year will see the exciting addition of the new Continental Cup program, which will serve teams ranked below Playoffs level. The Continental Cups will be modular and scalable, adapting to the competitive needs

of each region every year. The inaugural Continental Cup will be the North America East Cup, hosted by the Kalamazoo Derby Darlins, August 17-19. Next, from August 24-26 the North America West Cup will take place, hosted by the Omaha Rollergirls. Both North American Cups will feature 12 competing teams. Finally, the European Continental Cup will take place October 27-28, hosted by the Birmingham Blitz Dames, in the United Kingdom, with eight competing teams.

Are you ready for tournament season? Get your tickets at [wftda.com/ticket-information](http://wftda.com/ticket-information) and keep your eyes peeled for seeding announcements!



Donna Olmstead



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# junior derby practice

BETTY FORD GALAXY, RAINIER ROLLER GIRLS

COACH/FOUNDER OF THE LITTLES (COED JUNIOR FLAG ROLLER DERBY FOR KIDDOS AGES 4-8), FORMERLY RAT CITY ROLLERGIRLS  
AND COACH/FOUNDER OF THE SEATTLE DERBY BRATS (GIRLS ROLLER DERBY AGES 8-18)

This article was originally written many years ago when junior derby was just a baby itself. The drills are geared toward tweens and newbies mostly because at the time that is what I was coaching and what most junior leagues had. It wouldn't be until a few years later when the JRDA got a little more organized and the tweens and newbies grew to be veteran teen juniors who could compete at the same level (often if not better) than their older sister adult leagues. These are still great drills for kids. The heart of the story remains the same. To nurture and teach the next generation of roller derby and help them grow to be strong confident individuals who understand the importance of being on a team. It takes a village to raise a child. Coaching and assisting with roller derby and other such youth activities in a positive way I honestly believe can create a better tomorrow for roller derby and all humankind.

Coaching kids can be very different than coaching adults, from how you teach them the drills to the feedback and rewards you give for doing a drill properly. A lot of the drills you use in regular practice can be used with junior derby (and your adult league may even be able to learn something from some of these kid drills). One key thing to keep in mind, however, is that juniors have a much shorter attention span and they are more likely to actually learn something from the drill if they are having fun.

Kids need attention and approval from their adult coaches. One of the most basic things you must do is learn their names! If the kids do not have shirts yet, put white tape on the front of their helmets with their name on it in order to keep them straight. Make sure you are constantly giving little kudos to the kids — let them know when they do a good job. Compliment all the skaters equally. Derby — especially junior derby — is a great way to build self-esteem and your role as a coach is to encourage each of the skaters.

Not all of your kids will learn at the same pace or in the same way. Make sure you take the time to explain and demonstrate a drill before asking the skaters to do it. Demonstrate it once or twice yourself, then ask one of the kids to volunteer to show the others how to do it. Make sure they all understand it before moving on. Some drills may be harder for some skaters than others. Try taking the girls who need extra help to the side with a coach to go over it until they fully understand it and can work with the rest of the skaters.

Practice doesn't make perfect, perfect practice makes perfect. If your kids are doing a drill wrong make sure you work with them until they get it right. You want to establish good form and proper habits in your young skaters early so they won't have to "unlearn" a bad habit later.

A must for all practices is water breaks. Kids do not always know when they should be drinking water and some might not be used to that much exercise. I learned the hard way when we had to send a skater to the hospital for dehydration during a game!

Here are some drill ideas:

**BEANIE BABY LOW WORM** — Have skaters bring Beanie Babies or some other similar toy to place on their back as they skate in a line. If the toy falls off, they must put it back and go to the end of the line.

**ARMS LOW / ELBOWS IN SPONGES** — Give skaters a couple of sponges to keep under their arms — closer to the elbow than the armpit — during drills. If a skater drops one, she must do ten pushups or sit-ups.

**POSITIONS BY NUMBERS** — Create shirts or helmet panties with position numbers on them. This is a good way to teach newer or younger skaters the different pack positions, but isn't necessary to focus on for a long time (otherwise the skaters may forget that they can move around within the pack).

**LAST GIRL (WOMAN) STANDING / PRINCESS OF THE RINK** — If you are running a junior league with full contact, this is a great drill. All of the skaters begin on the floor, and must hit each other either out of bounds or onto the floor. The last skater up who has not gone out of bounds wins.

**HOW MANY FINGERS / PACK AWARENESS** — Have all skaters on the floor at once with a small number of pivots chosen. Skate behind the girls and call a name of a girl in the pack who will hold up a few fingers. The pivots must look for that girl and shout out how many fingers she is holding up. Make sure the pivot has yelled loud enough for you to hear them clearly from the back. Give each girl a few chances at pivot then switch them out. This is also a good time for the pack to learn to stay nice and tight.

**LOUD KIDS ARE HAPPY KIDS** — Line up the skaters at one end of the rink and allow about six at a time to do sprint laps. Tell them to scream as loud as they can from the start of the sprint through the first turn. This is a great way to get them to do more laps while having fun — turn it into a contest by saying things like "who is going to be the loudest group?"

## RELAYS

Kids love to be competitive, and there are so many different relays you can try. We usually tell the girls they are not allowed to stop by hitting the wall at either end; they have to control their speed and their stop. Girls who stop by hitting the wall have to do ten pushups or sit-ups.

**MILK JUGS** — Count the skaters off into groups and line them up at one end of the rink for a relay race. During her turn, each girl must kick an old, cleaned out milk jug (like a soccer ball) to the far wall and back. This is great for agility; it gets them to move their feet in new ways they are not used to without thinking so much about it.



Richard Williams



**FOOTBALL TWO LINES** – Count off the girls into groups and separate each group into two lines at one end of the rink. Have each pair skate forward to the other end of the rink and back while tossing a football back and forth to each other, one pair at a time.

**COMBINATION SKILLS** – Relays can involve any number of things – for example, eggshells on the way down (keep both feet on floor and propel forward by opening and closing your legs) and then skate backwards back, etc. Just pick a few different skills your girls might need to work on and put them together into a relay.

### WALL/OPEN

This is a layered drill – doing drills in layers can help kids understand them better.

**STEP ONE** – Put two packs of four on the track. One team is stagnant and just skates around. The other team's pivot yells commands – either "wall" or "open" – and the rest of the skaters on that team have to execute the command in ten seconds or less. For the wall, the group must make an exaggerated four-person wall as quickly as they can. If the pivot yells "open," the skaters must each pick one player from the stagnant team and lean, booty block, or drive her to one side to create a lane down the middle of the track. Switch teams and pivots so everyone has a chance.

**STEP TWO** – Same as above, but add a group of jammers skating behind the pack. Send the jammers through one at a time. The pivot of the executing team will need to make the appropriate call when the jammer is coming up to the pack – if it is her jammer she will yell "open," and if it is not her jammer, she will yell "wall."

**STEP THREE** – Same as step two but now the second team is no longer stagnant and both pivots will be yelling commands to their teams. Still send the jammers through one at a time. The teams at this point will now be working either to execute the pivot command or to stop the other team from executing their command.

**STEP FOUR** – Now line the kids up and bout normal. This will help them learn to switch from offense to defense by breaking it down in the first three steps.

### WORMS

Worms can be great for warm ups and basic skills. There are countless variations on worms. Here are just a few that the Seattle Derby Brats think are fun:

**NAME CALLING** – Have the girl skating up through the worm yell out the name of the girl she is passing as loud as she can. Coach tip – if they cannot talk/yell without their mouth guard falling out then the mouth guard does not fit right. The only exception to this would be a top bottom mouth guard used by skaters with braces. They will just have to deal with it until the braces come off. The drill will help them learn to yell with a mouth guard in and practice communication while skating. (On our league if you take your mouth guard out at any time while you are standing or skating you have to do ten pushups – that goes for coaches too).

**FOOTBALL PASS** – Have the girls pass a football from the back of the pack to the front. The person passing must yell "inside" or "outside"



Richard Williams

so the girl receiving the football knows where to look. The person receiving needs to turn her upper body to the girl behind her and reach with both hands to get the ball. Do not let them just grab the ball with one hand without looking back. When the football gets to the girl in the front she will race away from the pack with the ball and skate around the track until she is at the end of the pack and passes the ball up again. We usually use three to five footballs so the drill goes faster and they have to turn around more often.

**LONDON BRIDGES** – Have the girls hold hands in the pace line. Their right hand should be in front of them and their left hand should be behind them so they are facing the inside of the track. Send girls through the worm skating low so they go under the arms of the girls holding hands. Make sure it doesn't turn into a game of crack the whip. This drill helps the girls in the line control their speed while the girls going through have to skate low.

There are other fun little games you can play that will help with agility. You can limbo, play freeze tag, or sharks and minnows. Even a few rounds of duck duck goose on skates can teach them to pop up fast and have quick feet as well as how to stop fast.

We try to work our drills around the WFTDA basic skill requirements. We found this gives our girls a solid foundation of skating on which we can teach them roller derby. It also gives them attainable goals, especially for the really new skaters. Make sure you come up with many drill options and change them up a lot. Have enthusiasm for the drills and explain them well. Explain what they will learn by doing it and how they can have fun while learning. It is easier for the skaters if you have their attention and if you are excited about the drills. It is also more fun for me as a coach when I can keep them engaged and learning. It feels way better to give kudos and high fives than pushups!

One last thing, kids like to chat and be goofy. To help keep my girls in line I use a bull horn at practice, this way I don't lose my voice and I know they can all hear me. I do let them be goofy a lot. I often give them a free five minutes to just race around and give each other whips and pushes. They love the free skate and as long as they are out there doing something they are still learning and having fun. What more could you ask?! So now get out there and have some fun with your new league! You will be amazed at how fast your girls progress!★

# you can take the girl out of derby but you can't take the derby out of the girl

CAT OWTA HELL, ROUGHNECK ROLLER DERBY

**Derby is a fatal obsession that grabs you by the throat, sinks its ecstatic fangs into your quivering flesh and injects the addiction that will make you do anything to skate. Or maybe that's just me.**

Wherever you fall on the derby spectrum: avid skater or promising your soul to Satan for derby immortality, your big sister Cat Owta Hell is back from the desert to tell you that once you've pulled on those wet, crusty, rotten, salt-stained, goatshit Frito pads and eased skates over bloody blisters and left your all on the track, you're goners. Whatever you do, don't let derby be the one that got away.

I did. To everyone who asks why I quit, I reply blithely, "scheduling conflict" or "changed jobs," but between you and me, that's far from the truth. Here's what happened. I will describe it from beginning to end. From that first night when I walked so innocently into the rink, saw that maple floor gleaming like satin; I was under the spell. The growly rip of velcro, the clack of pads, the sensual purr and whirr of wheels on the track, the screech of hockey stops – these sounds I knew and loved like my own breath. They fed me. And when they were gone, they haunted me.

I remember skating in heat so intense that it was like breathing mushroom soup on the surface of the sun and the only way I could finish drills and scrimmaging without fainting was to fill a couple of Ziploc bags with ice, adjust my helmet straps and pack those bad boys right on my head. Those bags would always melt completely to water in less than half an hour. But I had wicked heat tolerance.

So, in three words, I was there. From wobbly fresh meat to sponsorship chair, to PR chair, to captain, I was there. I discovered that I had no derby limit. The coach could

demand harder, faster, better, more, and I could give it. The more he asked of me, the happier I was. Off the track I had no derby limit either. I wrote and sent press releases, delivered merch, sold tickets, did interviews. I got us on the news, in the newspaper, on tv and radio spots. I danced in the street for team car washes; I decorated our parade floats, bought candy and skated the roads in all weather for every parade; I purged my home donating items for every team garage sale. I was there. I made and sold my own candy for team uniforms. I made and sold candles for team travelling money. Every evening when normal civilians were home relaxing with family or enjoying time with friends, I was at practice, doing drills like Freeway Scrimmage or Satan's Mattress, or puking in the trash from too many burpees. On weekends when civilians were obviously living regular lives, I was sweating buckets in speed drills, brainstorming in committee meetings, listening to strategies and announcements in team meetings. I was there. I never blew off a practice, an event, a fundraiser, sale, trivia night, potluck or a meeting. I was there. I travelled with no hesitation to any bout within four states. I was the only attendee from my team, hell, my state, at Rollercon. I had skater business cards made and I constantly recruited fresh meat. I could assess women: tourist, blocker or jammer. For me, there was no downtime or off switch. I didn't want one.

I was there when all the skaters ruined our rosters with "nine-month" injuries. I composed all the official team documents and website pages; I assembled the welcome packets, made lists of safe places to outdoor skate and of the local rinks; I maintained the attendance sheets, copies of required minimum skills and the rules for newbies, carried extra sets of practice gear in my car; donated my own beginner R3s to the team for fresh meat, I created and paid



for helmet stickers and I made sure to stay in touch with fresh meat frequently so they always felt welcomed and wanted. I copied good articles about tying laces, wheel arrangement, buying gear, gave a comprehensive list of good derby websites, and wrote articles every spare moment. I was there when all the dilettantes and dabblers passed through. When the ones who swore derby allegiance forever then ghosted the rink. I saw the superstars rise and fall, while I remained rock solid and devoted, a good blocker with fierce balance, but nothing special.

But our local derby began dying. There were profound team upheavals, rivalry, politics, massive burnout, ugly rumors, vitriol, nasty bitchiness, and all my efforts didn't make any difference. No matter how hard I worked, attendance got lower and the fresh meat fled. Even when I provided rides to and from practice and paid monthly dues for struggling skaters, derby was on life support and I was heartbroken and certifiable. My passion couldn't keep a team alive. I had been convinced that only a catastrophic injury would retire me, but it was indifference instead.

When no one attended the meetings, when too much about team business was on hold and we lost sponsors and couldn't add any because we had no merch, no rink, no coach, and no bouts, and we couldn't buy anything and we were searching for cheap places to bout and for a good coach and skaters just kept dropping off the roster, I realized I was exhausted. I had helped grow two teams to flourish and thrive and when derby began to tank, I finally recognized I had been on fumes for too long. When I was the only skater to show up for the Mardi Gras parade, I folded up my heart, packed my skates and disappeared. I tried to let go. I wondered about the team. I kept hoping that someday I could go back.

I had been there. I was derby bedrock. Anything for the team was my way of life.

My grief kept me from skating for three years and for me and derby, there is no closure. I did my best to process my sorrow; I cried just saying the word "derby" for two solid years; I tried other sports, thinking I could force lightening to

strike twice—sculling NO! Rugby NO! I finally achieved peace. I had let go at last. But derby kept whispering in my ear, pulling on me, visiting in my dreams, inexorably luring me back to the track.

Now I've returned and reunion never felt so good. That first practice I was so high and happy, I doubt my skates touched the track at all. I never checked the time or my phone. The agony screaming in my body for the next three days just made me grin. Derby had burned itself to the ground and re-emerged like a phoenix while I was gone. One of the other skaters who had begun and built this team with me smiled and said, "Look, Cat, what do you think of the team now? This is your baby." I thought I was finished crying, but that really finished me off.

I have gone through derby trials and now I am a Derby OG and this team doesn't know me at all. They can tell I've skated, but they don't know about that terrible tournament; the hematoma, my derby wife, or the history that made their fresh meat class possible.

But I don't care! That's not what matters. I'm back on the track. I'm not a superstar, but I am crazy strong and have monster endurance and I'll do anything to skate better and be there for the team.

So just a little advice — think twice before you leave your team. If you have to leave, don't hesitate to return as soon as you can. The girls want you back and are waiting. The women who have seen you cry and rage and puke; women you've shared sweat with, women you've smelled; women you've cheered for, scrimmaged against, and are bonded. I have no idea what your name is or what you look like without your helmet, but on the track, I love you.

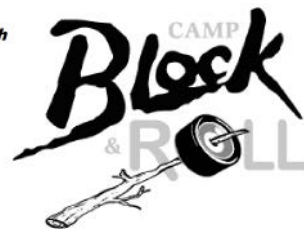
That lightness you feel in your heart? Derby. The joy in your mind? Derby. The satisfied soul? Derby. The power badass stare and amazon walk? Derby. The laughter in your throat; the radiance in your eyes, the glow in your skin. Derby, derby, derby. No derby, no peace. Know derby, know peace.

Loving it ain't for lightweights and giving it up is impossible. So you might as well suit up and roll.★

# camp block and roll

BETTY FORD GALAXY, RAINIER ROLLER GIRLS

Sept 7th - 9th  
2018



Roller derby training camps are a great way to learn new skating skills, practice the most current roller derby strategies and to meet some rad new roller derby friends. There are all types of camps you can attend. Knowing more about the different camps and what you want out of camp can help you decide which one to go to.

Conventions like RollerCon and NE DerbyCon are large gatherings where several coaches come to one location. You can choose from several different classes. Often you don't get to take all the classes you want but the choices are amazing. Vendors will be brought in, so you can see all the newest skates, pads, helmets, and other equipment up close and personal instead of just ordering online. (Unless you are lucky enough to live in a city with a brick and mortar skate shop.) Typically, they are 3-5 days long and held at a convention center. Often there are different price levels depending on how much you want to participate. You can pay a spectator price, skating price, and some have MVP pricing for more options or priority access to classes. One of the best things about conventions is the large amount of people you will meet and the new friendships that you will create. Another is the many options you have where you can pick and choose the classes you want to take. However, often classes at conventions can have up to 50 or more skaters in one class. There is not a lot of one-on-one attention, but it is a great way to have lessons from many different coaches. Often a skater will take a class at a convention and love it and the coach so much they will later have that same coach come to their league and do a private clinic.

Leagues will often hold clinics at their practice facility. This can be one or more days. Travel team skaters might host as a fundraiser. It can be specific like blocking as a campfire / cube clinic or offense timing drill. This can be just a few hours. The prices for these clinics are usually pretty reasonable. I like the idea that my participation is helping a league too. This is a fun way to learn a new trick or two that you can bring back to your league and practice.

Beginner Boot Camps are often geared toward taking a fairly brand-new skater from basically non-skating to being ready to try out for a league or at least give the person a pretty good idea if roller derby is something they want to continue to pursue. Often the main focus of these boot camps are to help that skater to pass minimum skills so they will focus on those types of drills. The boot camp can be one or more days a week and run anywhere from a few weeks to a few months. A league can run a beginner boot camp at their normal practice times in their off season which gives the regular league mates time off but helps the league continue to utilize its practice space. Prices on these types of camps are often similar to what the league dues would be for the league or a little extra to help fundraise or pay for coaches.

Many roller derby coaches offer private coaching. For a fee they will come to your league's practice and do a clinic for you. You can tell them what your team needs to work on and where you are at skills wise and they can come with something designed just for you. Most coaches are pretty easy to contact through Facebook or the web and you can discuss with them what you need and negotiate a price. This is good when your team has an area they struggle with and their coaches have not been able to come up with practice drills that work. Sometimes having another set of eyes on your team can help. Be flexible. The coach might come in with a plan to teach you one thing that you discussed and realize that you are not getting to strategy "C" because your team can't execute basic skill "A" and basic concept "B". The coach might on the fly come up with something different to work on than what you had discussed but they feel better suited for your end goals.





Many clinics and boot camps have specific blocker and jammer skills that you learn and they end with a scrimmage for those in class to get a chance to practice right away in a game setting the skills you just learned. This is really effective for those who learn by “doing” and if you are one of those types of learners, having a scrimmage at the end of the camp you attend is a great asset.

Then there is Camp Block and Roll held in Eatonville, WA. It is the most amazing roller derby boot camp experience. I probably sound a little biased because this is my camp. I have always loved camping, going to sleep away camp and retreats. (I am a camp volunteer at Camp Mariposa, a camp for kids whose parents struggle with addiction.) I decided that there needed to be a roller derby sleep away camp and in October of 2017 I hosted the first Camp Block and Roll. It is a sleep away camp where everything pretty much except your skates and gear are included in the price of camp. The

camp is set in a woodsy lakeside remote area of Western Washington with plenty of trees and green space for all your fun outdoor activities. There are many peaceful trails through the woods on the property if you just need some alone time and want to go for a walk. But not so remote it will take you forever to get there. The camp is unique that it has a full-size gym on the property. The floor is not ideal, so I bring in a sport court. The cabins are fairly new and very clean. They feature your typical bunk beds and a common area for socializing. There is a game room with pool tables and ping pong for relaxing. A large cafeteria is where you will be eating your meals with the other skaters and coaches. The food is amazing, and the camp is able to accommodate most food allergies and special requests. As someone who has been to many camps and retreats I assure you that the food at Camp Block and Roll is the best camp food I have ever had.★





The camp runs Friday afternoon until Sunday just before dinner. Each day you will have on skates classes with specific subjects. Outdoors in the fresh air you will have off skates workouts geared toward the derby skater to enhance your game. Each morning there is yoga stretch to wake you up and one yoga class during the day with yoga specifically for the derby body. In a classroom setting you will have a class on how to watch derby footage. Some fun camp activities are the zip line, life-size foosball and the “No Talent – Everyone Has a Talent – Talent Show.” Everything is included in the price except your travel expenses to get there which ends up saving you a lot when you figure in hotel and food costs you end up spending when you go to other boot camps.

The camp has around 60 skaters and they are broken up into two skill levels. This way the classes are pretty small and you get a chance to really meet some of the other people at camp and have lots of one on one time with the coaches. There is some down time and time at meals to

either bond with your teammates that have come or make new fabulous friends. It is hard to explain in words what a wonderful experience it was to go to Camp Block and Roll, tune out the world, and just focus on roller derby and having fun for three days. There is wifi and most everyone had cell service. It isn't that far out, but since you don't have to leave the camp for meals or lodging it is a nice little getaway from traffic and the comings and goings of life that can stress us out. This is a great camp if you are looking for an “experience” and not just “training.”

There are so many great options out there for additional learning. Figure out what your goals are. Is it learning new strategy or perfecting some skating skills? You might want to really focus on one or two skills or maybe you just want to skate a little and party with your friends. Is this something for you to “get away” or is it something for your whole team? There are no wrong answers. It's all great and there are camps or conventions that can help you achieve your goals. It is good to do some research first so you don't end







up going to RollerCon for some peace and quiet or come to Camp Block and Roll and expect to see 5,000 skaters and a vendor mall. One good place to look is the “Roller Derby Bootcamps and Clinics” Facebook group. [facebook.com/groups/766856760100821](https://facebook.com/groups/766856760100821)

Whatever camp or clinic you decide to attend make sure to bring a notebook and a pen. Take lots of notes because there will be things about it later you might forget. In the notebook it is helpful to have printouts or draw several derby

tracks so you can easily make diagrams of drills. Always have an extra water bottle and snacks so you don’t miss any of the training if you get thirsty or hungry.

The next Camp Block and Roll is September 7th–9th, 2018.

You can find out more info at [campblockandroll.com](http://campblockandroll.com), [facebook.com/campblockandroll](https://facebook.com/campblockandroll), or [bfgsports@gmail.com](mailto:bfgsports@gmail.com). Tickets available at [campblockandroll2018.brownpapertickets.com](http://campblockandroll2018.brownpapertickets.com)★

# official behavior

PROFESSOR MURDER, PHILLY ROLLER DERBY

Officials are always officials, even off the track. On occasion, the actions and words of those of us who don the stripes fail to recognize that. The following points help convey appropriate behavior for officials when “off the clock.”

We are, of course, fans of the game, and have lots of colleagues, friends, and even those we may not be so friendly with in this sport. We’re also volunteers who got into this sport because of our friends, spouses, and love of the game. As a volunteer, we want to have fun, of course. But as officials, we have a vital responsibility to maintain and uphold certain standards, both on and off the track. Outside of games, scrimmages, and practice, we should always strive to serve as proper ambassadors for roller derby, and help maintain the respect for and integrity of the sport. This includes the following:

## DON'T BE CRITICAL OF OTHER OFFICIALS

Officials may make mistakes, overlook a call, or incorrectly award (or fail to award) points. This is going to happen as a result of refs training at various levels. Also, so much action happens during the typical two minute jam that, at some point, something will inevitably be missed by some or all officials. The structure of the typical derby game makes catching every illegal action nearly impossible.

As an official, though, the golden rule applies. Don't speak ill of other officials' performances, and rest easy assuming they won't do the same of you. More important than saving referee egos, however, is the integrity of the game.

Publicly questioning or disagreeing with a referee's call does more harm to derby than it does the referee. This sport is at a stage where it is growing a fanbase that is dedicated, sophisticated, and informed. They need to believe in the sport as a legitimate competition that is legitimately and consistently judged by officials.

As an official, you are always representing roller derby on some level. Simply put, don't cloud the minds of fans, skaters, and other refs with doubt about the quality of officiating.

## DO BE CRITICAL OF OTHER OFFICIALS

But let's be honest; mistakes happen in every sport. The NFL controversy over referee Ed Hochuli's bad call proves that. (He ruled a fumble as an incomplete pass, allowing Denver to keep possession and ultimately win the game over San Diego.) So, as officials, we do need to help each other identify and understand where we stand to improve in our skills and understanding.

Officials in the WFTDA have different levels of rules knowledge, skating ability, experience, and certification. The only way they'll improve as officials is to have other people watch, evaluate, and critique their performances. If you find yourself watching derby as a fan, keep an eye on other refs. See how they perform. Take notes if you want to.

The goal is to inform other officials of areas where they need to improve. Was their application of the rules inconsistent? Is their skating on the outside a bit sluggish? Were they not paying attention or communicating with other officials and nonskating officials? They absolutely need

to know what they can do to improve.

The crucial element of criticism is to be informative and generally positive. “You suck,” or a list of things they did incorrectly simply won't do anything to help someone improve. Providing them with examples of best practices, reminding them of proper techniques, and encouraging them to strive to improve are the techniques that are necessary.

Positivity and tact are crucial when providing feedback or criticism. Stress what they did do correctly, give pointers on how to improve what they need to, and most of all, wait for the right moment and do it in private. The proper time and place can make accepting criticism easier, and they may respect or thank you for their help. We all stand to improve in many ways, and should welcome criticism. But it needs to be done tactfully and framed in a way that doesn't berate or insult the official.

## IDENTIFY A MENTOR (AND BE SOMEONE ELSE'S MENTOR)

We all need someone to guide us informally. Even if we rely on various WFTDA committees for guidance, it's also important to have someone to talk with. A good mentor is a good listener, someone who offers constructive advice and feedback, and can empathize with difficult situations. Being a WFTDA official is not always easy; it can be infuriatingly difficult at times. A good mentor helps guide us through these seemingly inevitable and insurmountable difficulties, and come out stronger and better prepared to handle the tasks we've chosen to do. They are the wise sages among officials.



So pay it forward. Be willing to help an official move up. Whether it's assisting in something as simple as identifying who the lead jammer is, or as complex as the most agonizing drama, all officials need mentors. As you grow as an official, you should be able to help and encourage others to grow with you.

#### **ASK THE RIGHT PEOPLE (DON'T REINVENT THE WHEEL)**

This might be best summed as "know your experts." As an official, identify who the officials and skaters in positions of power or influence (within the WFTDA) are. Talk with those who have participated in tournaments at the regional and national level. Talk to certified officials.

Talk to members of officials and rules committees. The WFTDA is not a monarchy, but it does have groups and committees to help disseminate rules specifications, clarifications, and to encourage use of best practices. Rely on formal means of inquiry, like the WFTDA rules subsite ([rules.wftda.com](http://rules.wftda.com)), but also be aware of the limitations of more informal means (e.g., Internet groups external to the WFTDA).

Other officials may have valid and useful opinions. That said, striving toward uniformity and consistency is helped by asking those who are part of the formal process. As officials in the WFTDA, we defer to the WFTDA. Those are the people who need to be asked first. And almost certainly last.

#### **PUSH, BUT DON'T PUSH HARD**

Again, the WFTDA is a limited democratic organization. There are many opinions about the state of the game. The input that we have collectively in the game is a virtually unprecedented and amazing

opportunity. We are all active participants in shaping the sport.

So regarding opinions about the game, some may think (for instance) that officials should lose derby names and adopt a stringent uniform guideline, while others may think any game without a "penalty wheel," for an outdated example, is positively droll.

When voicing your opinion, respect the diversity, and respect the voting majority. Have your say, but be conscientious of the opinions of others. If the game changes in a way that you like, that's great! If it doesn't, however, don't pout or complain. Have respect for others' opinions and formal decisions made regarding the game.

This means that, without fail, the game will adopt some things you personally like, and also some things you may not be too fond of. But, like disparaging your fellow officials, complaining about it undercuts the integrity of the organization, and shows selfishness by disrespecting the views of the majority who voted on the policies and rules.

#### **KNOW WHOSE GAME IT IS (AND STAY THERE)**

Officials are the friends, spouses, and many are related to skaters in ways that may be unique to this sport. However, flat track roller derby is first, last, and everything in between the skaters' game. Don't ever forget that.

Officials who proclaim their love and admiration for teams and skaters, or that they have a "crush" on a skater not only jeopardize the hard work that goes into proving derby as a legitimate hard-hitting sport, but also potentially violate the very sort of safe space for women that derby

provides. If you're making skaters uncomfortable, you shouldn't be in the game at all.

#### **WHEN IN DOUBT, BE QUIET IN PUBLIC**

This is the most important lesson for being an official when off the track. Be publicly involved; the networking of derby is a phenomenal thing to be a part of. But, as a ref, you need to be very mindful of what you say publicly. This includes all of the previous points: keep your fandom to yourself, keep your dislikes to yourself, keep your crushes and opinions to yourself.

As officials, we are all fans of the sport. How can you not love derby and be a part of it? But being a fan involves responsibility. Just like critiques of other officials, we need to recognize how to curtail our enthusiasm. Cheering for "your" team may be fine (just don't wear your stripes when doing it!). Let people know that you appreciate their style, their performance, their skill at the sport. Refer back to the idea of maintaining the integrity of the game, though, and don't publicly flaunt it.

As a WFTDA official, you are always a WFTDA official. This doesn't mean that you are not allowed to have opinions, or favorites, or even people you may not like very much. But that's for you to know and to share with the right people when appropriate. Your responsibilities as an official extend beyond the boundaries of games, scrimmages, and practices.

At all times, remember: show respect for the game, show respect for every skater, show respect for every fan, know your role in the organization, and be a positive endorsement for the WFTDA.★

# roller derby world cup

BILLY NO SKATES, LEEDS ROLLER DERBY  
PHOTOS BY JASON RUFFELL

On 1 February, 2018, the first whistle blew on the Roller Derby World Cup (RDWC) in Event City, Manchester, UK. Thousands of people attended the 4-day event, the biggest crowd at a RDWC to date, flocking in from all corners of the earth to attend one of the biggest spectacles in the sport of roller derby. A signifier of the growth and importance of the RDWC is that the final day of the event was streamed for the first time ever on the website of the British national broadcaster, the BBC.

The Roller Derby World Cup is a good indicator of the growth of the sport around the world. This time around was the third iteration of the event and there were some new teams competing on this world stage that we hadn't seen before, including two of the most intriguing, Team IRN and Team Indigenous. Both teams had a Herculean job even getting their teams and players together, let alone facing track time with some of the best players in the world.

Team IRN turned up at the RDWC with a squad of 12 players that had never trained together and who couldn't skate under the name of their country, namely Iran. The team was founded by Carmen and Mithra, both players of Iranian descent, who first got the idea when they recognized each other's names as somewhat Persian in origin. They thought to themselves, "We can't be the only ones – there must be other players out there like us." As London Rollergirls' Jazmyn Sadri says, yes – but only 12!

Team IRN had a lot to do to actually get to the RDWC, as the players discovered early on. Having identified enough people to pull a squad together, they had to pay for the team's registration, and start pooling funds to organize transport and accommodation for the event.

There are a lot of sanctions and boycotts of Iran by the international community. It turns out that these are boycotts not just of the Iranian regime, but also of the word Iran itself. The team tried to set up a PayPal account, which wouldn't work, and a GoFundMe page to allow their skaters to pay their way, but they were unable to do this without demonstrating that none of the funds they were collecting were going to actually go to Iran. It is extremely difficult to prove a negative – and this was why Team IRN came about: dropping one letter of the name made it possible to set up the necessary accounts and plan things from a logistical perspective.

Jaz also explains, "Many of our skaters were concerned about the idea that they might be seen to represent the country or the government of Iran. Many of our skaters also still have family in Iran and want to be able to go back. We wanted to be clear that we are representing Iranian people, the Iranian diaspora, inside and outside Iran, rather than any political system or regime."

The team chose a symbol to represent them, of the Simorgh (or Simurgh) which is a bird in the Persian legends. Lilo Multi'Cass describes the Simorgh: "It's kind of like a phoenix, but more like the royalty of the birds. A lot of birds,







the Conference of the birds, were living together in discord and they wanted royalty to rule over them. They went on a quest to the portal where the king of the birds should be, having many adventures along the way, and eventually they discover that they are the Simorgh, all thirty of them together. The name Simorgh literally means thirty birds." Jaz adds, "hopefully some day there will be thirty of us! We are a lot less than thirty but one day..."

Having brought the team together, the next barrier was training. Some of the players had literally passed their minimum skills within a few months of the RDWC – and the team first had the chance to play together in January, in London. "We met for a coffee and then went to training. We trained for four hours and the next day scrimmaged against LRG B team, followed by a day off, another day of training and then Manchester!" Liloo says. "We were really lucky with our bench, the coaching was fantastic."

Representing the Iranian people is of huge importance to team IRN, as Liloo goes on to say: "I feel that roller derby is more than a sport. Of course there is the athleticism, which is very important, but there are also a lot of values in this community, and it brings people together. It's very important for women today. All societies in the world need this sport to spread and it's a shame we don't have this in Iran. There are many women

skaters in Iran, you can follow them on Instagram, they're very active. They do what they call aggressive skating in the street and I think they would love roller derby. I would be happy to think that we can have them on the team one day."

Liloo says, "I really hope this team will last and grow. We were the first team from the middle East but there are another two teams being put together in the middle East as

we speak. I'm really happy that the sport is growing in this part of the world. We all have to achieve and give ourselves the means to achieve. We are really happy to be this group of Simorgh, we came together very harmoniously in the end."

For Team Indigenous, the challenges they faced were different, though no less daunting. The team was founded by Mick Swagger, April Dawn and Skintastic Dynamite. Mick Swagger, aka Melissa Waggoner, has been involved in roller derby for more than ten years. Mick grew up in the Diné Nation in the South West Desert in Turtle Island (known by some as North America) and has

always been extremely proud of her Diné, Omaha and Pawnee heritage.

Mick says, "Gotham does a lot of work in letting people know who their skaters are. When Gotham won the Hydra, many women got in touch to say how great it is that there is a high-profile skater on a hydra-winning team who is





a visibly indigenous player, and they shared their stories with me. So many of the people who got in touch said 'I've always been uncomfortable feeling that I'm the only indigenous player on my team.' They felt that me being visibly there made it easier for them to play with their leagues. And when I made Team USA [as was in 2014], I was contacted by an incredible number of indigenous women saying the same thing."

However, Mick was feeling that Team USA was not the best fit for her. She goes on to say, "playing for Team USA, I didn't feel like I was representing my nation. Wearing the American flag is the anthesis of who I am, and standing for the national anthem sat very uncomfortably with me. I said at the time, I want to come back to the world cup but I want to come back with my people. So I suggested Team Indigenous on some of those groups and it kind of started from there."

Together, Mick, Skin and April Dawn started looking at the logistics of putting together a team made up of skaters located very far away from each other. As both Mick's activism and coaching business largely operate online, they decided this was the best way to bring people together. They put the word out about setting up Team Indigenous and invited people to send in videos of

themselves skating, and selected the team based on these.

Blackrock Bruiser, skater for Queen City, who is of Cayuga and Seneca heritage, told me about Team Indigenous's first training sessions. "We met for the first time in Manchester, got together for the first time. Because everyone is from all over the world, it wasn't possible to fund getting together beforehand." Some of the players come from Turtle Island, which is a huge geographic area in itself, but others came from Aotearoa and Australia — the logistics simply did not allow for any team time before the tournament.

All three women have been incredibly proud of their performance at the tournament. Skin says, "the roller derby community have mostly been really accepting, which is wonderful. I don't believe a lot of them knew or understood what we stood for."

So what does Team Indigenous stand for? It is clear from their presence and poise at the RDWC that this is not just a roller derby team.

Skintastic Dynamite elaborated on some of the reasons why Team Indigenous is needed, not just in the US but all over the world. Skin says, "We wanted to create this platform for missing and murdered indigenous women. I work in addiction counselling and I have seen so much of



that and I am done! I have seen enough of that. There are more than 5,000 reported on Turtle Island alone. There are more than 500 tribes.”

Skin goes on to deliver the sobering facts. “We’re the only ethnicity that the department of justice doesn’t track completely,” she says. “The figures are not totally accurate, as they will put white instead of Native American, unless the family produces a certificate of Indian blood to prove ancestry. Homicide is the third cause of death among Native American and

Alaskan women aged 10-24. 5,712 Native women were reported missing last year.

“In 2016, 322,263 women were reported missing in the US, of whom 9,989 were indigenous women. Those numbers are from the National Crime registry. On some reservations, women are murdered at ten times the national rate. In some states such as New Mexico and Washington, the authorities register missing women as white, unless the family produce a certificate of Indian blood. Those are some of the statistics.

“That’s what we stand for, we’re so much more than roller derby,” Skin says. “We’re here to shed light on indigenous issues, roller derby is secondary. We love the sport of roller derby and these women were phenomenal. To make this statement at the world cup, that’s a big deal. It’s a big platform to present what we’re about, which is indigenous rights, missing and murdered indigenous

women, and being able to spread awareness of that. It’s the thread that runs through all of us, that we’re all indigenous people, we’re always connected, no matter where we come from.” Blackrock Bruiser says, “playing for Team Indigenous means being able to meet other women that are like me, and remind ourselves that we are still here, we are strong, we are powerful. We are everything our ancestors stood for. It’s about making a space for us where we are comfortable, coming together to share this oneness, wherever we are

from. For me, it’s been a lot of self-discovery, going back and learning more about my own roots.”

Whatever the origins of the women that form Team Indigenous, by and large their experience at the world cup has also been a positive one:

“The crowd has been so supportive, the skaters have been so supportive, and getting to know everyone has been an incredible experience. Seeing that crowd out there and everyone is cheering, it’s so positive,” says Blackrock Bruiser. “It’s been crazy.

I’m super proud of the team, how easily and quickly we came together, how much heart the skaters have put into everything they do, it is a complete honor to be a part of this team.”

Mick says, “The world cup has given us this new sisterhood, this new energy to keep doing what we’re doing. I’ve seen people grow so much, within the sport of roller derby but also spiritually and in what our mission is overall.”★



# sirenz of truth

KIM GITZEL, SIRENZ OF TRUTH

Sirenz of Truth: The Rad Rollerz is a free online webcomic celebrating all things girlpower, adventure, body positivity, multiculturalism, action, inclusivity, living in one's Truth, and of course, rollerwheel love to da max! The creative journey began seven years ago...

Back in 2011, when I fell in love with roller derby, my daughter was 2.5 years old. She received a doll in the mail. I looked at it and said aloud, "I wish there was a doll that embraced inner strength, actual (realistic) body proportions, and the bad assery I feel while playing roller derby."

I mean, really... when was the last time you strolled down a toy aisle and went, "Oh wow! Hey, that's awesome how the girls' toy industry has really embraced body positivity, diversity, athleticism, individuality and interests beyond fashion!" Ummyeahhh, probably never...

Six months later that year, I formed an LLC and was getting a prototype of an articulated roller derby doll with realistic body proportions made, because I believed in the vision THAT much. Unfortunately, as time passed, adulting things beyond my playful desires took over and both the doll idea AND derby had to be set aside. BUT, the vision never went away.

One fateful day, a couple years later (2014), a key person suggested that instead of focusing on creating a doll (product) that I create a *story* and from there all kinds of products could be born.

While in clinic I daydreamed about not just one roller derby girl, but five. And then it hit me... Chinese Medical

Theory is based on the Five Elements. Wham Bam, Thank You Ma'am, my Sirenz story was born!

By overlaying Traditional Chinese Medical theory on top of five roller derby girls, all kinds of fun, exciting character archetypes were born. For example, in Asian Medicine, the influence that creates disharmony in the body is called "Evil Pernicious Influence". In my story they are the bad guys; the "Evil Pernicious Invaders."

Each girl represents the archetype of one of the five Chinese Elements: Water, Wood, Fire, Earth and Metal. Nerd Alert!: I am having a blast creating the Sirenz story by smooching my two passions together.

And beyond that, as a parent, I know expressing all the elements of BEing in one's Truth must also be acknowledged. So, I hope this story walks the line where the action, adventure and suspense is there, but also embedded in it are the lessons about growing up in an authentic way in alignment to an individual's intuited self truth.

Months later, I had a pilot script made alongside all the character art. I travelled to L.A. to pitch it to Hollywood. Man, is that joint crazy hard to break into!

For two years I pursued lead after lead (with a few lulls in between due to solo mom/adulting etc). I/Sirenz never got the big break. (Here's the inside secret about Hollywood: They all want something fresh and new and edgy (Sirenz!), but they want it to be similar to a previously known hit that made \$\$, oh and written by a well proven writer. ~Yeah, remember how impressed I was all those years back in the toy aisle? ~ Don't worry, I think it's nonsensical, crazy too. It was dizzying, to say the least.)

By September of 2017, I decided it was time for Sirenz to







be in the world regardless of how it was to be presented. So I switched gears (again) from it to becoming a cartoon and focused on creating a DIY web comic.

And so here we are. This is my passion project. It brings happiness to my heart that my daughter Grace is growing up now reading a comic about five different girls, with five very different interests beyond skating, who are teammates, bonded together to help protect their home and the people they adore from a dark and sinister force wanting to do harm. Plus, a boatload of rollerskating – all forms of rollerskating from roller derby (of course!) to skate park fun, to street skating, to skate dancing and beyond!

You can follow us on several social media platforms: @sirenzoftruth on IG and Twitter and our Sirenz of Truth FB page. But of course, if you want to get the actual goods, then visit the website where it all happens: sirenzoftruth.com.

You can sign up FOR FREE by adding your email. I promise, I will NEVER sell your email. (I'm tallying the fan base so when it does blow up and becomes mega popular and Nickelodeon does come knocking on my door to turn it into the next TMNT, I can tell them exactly how many dedicated subscriber fans we have! So share it with your derby mates/share it with your family, friends and beyond!

Mahalo for your support!★





# WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

THERE ARE SEVEN DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE PHOTOS – FIND 'EM!



Paul Deloche



1. Pink jammer is missing tattoo on right leg.
2. Green jammer's tattoo has changed color.
3. Green jammer's yellow strap is missing from skate.
4. Official's skates have changed color.
5. Blocker on right's pants have changed color.
6. Blocker on left is missing number from jersey.
7. Blue line is missing from the floor on the right.



