

# The Rules of Flat Track Roller Derby



**WFTDA, February 15, 2017**

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## Contents

### Changes Summary

#### Changes to Game Structure

The February 15, 2017 version of *The Rules of Flat Track Roller Derby* introduces some changes to game structure, reviewed and developed by the WFTDA Rules Committee with input and guidance from WFTDA and MRDA member leagues. The following is a list of notable changes that highlight game structure differences from the 2015-2016 rule set.

<b>January 1, 2015 Rule Set</b>	<b>February 15, 2017 Rule Set</b>
Penalties are assigned to the Pivot when no one Skater can be determined most responsible.	Penalties are assigned to the Skater nearest to the Official calling the penalty when no one Skater is most responsible.
Skaters leaving the Penalty Box without direction to do so by an Official receive a second penalty.	Skaters leaving the Penalty Box without direction to do so by an Official only receive a second penalty if their time was not completed yet.
Skaters who have a jam called off due to injury must sit for 3 jams. Skaters who have a jam called due to injury more than once in one period must sit out the rest of the period.	Skaters who are a) substituted in the Penalty Box, b) have a jam called off due to injury, or c) require an OTO to be called in order for them to exit the track area must sit for 3 jams. Skaters who alter the flow of the game more than once in the game due to injury must sit out the rest of the period.
Designated Alternates cannot be replaced after they are ejected from a game.	Teams can choose a new Alternate.

### Rules Summary

The game of Flat Track Roller Derby is played on a flat, oval track. Play is broken up into two 30-minute periods, and within those periods, into units of play called “Jams,” which last up to two minutes. There are 30 seconds between each Jam.

During a Jam, each team fields up to five Skaters. Four of these Skaters are called “Blockers” (together, the Blockers are called the “Pack”), and one is called a “Jammer.” The Jammer wears a helmet cover with a star on it.

The two Jammers start each Jam behind the Pack, and score a point for every opponent they lap, each lap. Because they start behind the Pack, they must get through the Pack, then all the way around the track to be ready to score points on opposing Blockers.

Roller derby is a full-contact sport; however, Skaters cannot use their heads, elbows, forearms, hands, knees, lower legs, or feet to make contact to opponents. Skaters cannot make contact to opponents' heads, backs, knees, lower legs, or feet.

Play that is unsafe or illegal may result in a Skater being assessed a penalty, which is served by sitting in the Penalty Box for 30 seconds of Jam time.

The team with the most points at the end of the game wins.

A common Jam might go like this:

1. Blockers line up behind the Pivot Line and in front of the Jammer Line.
2. Jammers line up behind the Jammer Line.
3. At the Jam-Starting Whistle, the Blockers skate forward and compete for superior position. The Jammers skate forward and try to get through the Pack. Each Blocker simultaneously tries to prevent the opposing Jammer from getting past, and to help their own Jammer get through.
4. One Jammer exits the Pack and is declared Lead Jammer, earning the right to end the Jam when they decide. This Jammer races around the track to get into scoring position.
5. The same Jammer begins to work their way through the Pack for the second time, and the opposing Jammer makes their way out of the Pack for the first time.
6. As the second Jammer to escape the Pack comes around into scoring position, the first Jammer calls off the Jam.
7. The first Jammer has scored several points (up to four), and held their opponent at zero points. Meanwhile, the opposing Jammer (by getting into scoring position) held the first Jammer at only those points, as they could have scored more points on subsequent passes.

## Casebook

### 1. Positions

***When a Jam begins, the Jammers must be touching on or behind the Jammer Line. Blockers must all be behind the Pivot Line, ahead of the Jammer Line, and all Non-Pivot Blockers must not be touching the Pivot Line. If either Pivot lines up touching the Pivot Line at the Jam's start, all Non-Pivot Blockers must be behind that Pivot's hips.***

—Origin: Section 2.2

■ **Scenario C1.1** As the Jam-Starting Whistle sounds, White Blocker is out of bounds on the inside of the track.

**Outcome:** White Blocker is directed to return to their bench and cannot participate in the Jam.

**Rationale:** White Blocker was not on the track at the start of the Jam and cannot participate in that Jam.

**Keep in Mind:** Even if White Blocker were straddling, they would still be considered out of bounds, thus not on the track, thus not allowed to participate in the Jam.

■ **Scenario C1.2** Red and White Skaters repeatedly shift positions between Jams, attempting to gain position on one another. During the many switches, Red 34 lines up fully behind the Jammer Line but is not wearing the Star. Red 27 lines up fully in front of the Jammer Line and is wearing the Star.

**Outcome:** Red 27 is the Jammer.

**\*Rationale:** Red 27 is the Skater in possession of the Star. The Star denotes who the Jammer is. Both Skaters should receive a penalty for beginning the Jam fully out of position.

**Keep in Mind:** Once the Jam starts, the Jammer Referee should communicate to Red 27 that they are the Jammer for this Jam. While the rules accommodate for Jammers who forget their helmet cover, starting position should never take precedence over wearing the Star. In this case, both the Jammer (Red 27) and the Blocker (Red 34) have lined up in illegal starting positions.

**Keep in Mind:** Assume the following Jammer hierarchy:

1	The Jammer for the upcoming Jam is	the Jammer from the previous Jam who is in the Penalty Box.
2	If no one satisfies 1, the Jammer is	the Skater who controls the Star who has lined up in the Jammer Starting Position.
3	If no one satisfies 2, the Jammer is	the Skater who controls the Star but who has lined up out of position.
4	If no one satisfies 3, the Jammer is	the Skater who has lined up in the Jammer Starting Position without the Star.
5	If no one satisfies 4,	there is no Jammer for that team in this Jam.
6	If there is no Jammer,	the Jam should not start.

## 2. Penalties

For the following scenarios, the following information should be assumed.

- The home team is wearing red uniforms.
- The visiting team is wearing white uniforms.
- Both teams have legally fielded three Blockers, a Pivot, and an Active Jammer, unless otherwise noted.
- The Jam begins and the Pack is defined.
- All Skaters move counterclockwise, unless otherwise noted, and begin to block one another.

## 2.1. Contact Penalties

***Making contact to an illegal target zone should be penalized based on the impact it has on the target.*** (see 2.4.1)

—Origin: Section 4.1.1

■ **Scenario C2.1** White Blocker, falling as a result of contact with Red Blocker’s skates, “falls small” by tucking their arms and legs close into their body. Red Jammer, skating close behind, trips over White Blocker and falls.

**Outcome:** No penalty.

**Rationale:** White Blocker did everything in their power to prevent themselves from being a hazard.

**Keep in Mind:** Were this the third time White Blocker had caused an opponent to fall in this manner, they should receive a penalty. While “falling small” mitigates the safety risk of a Skater falling on the track, excessively falling with impact represents a larger safety risk that should result in a penalty.

## Glossary

Some words or concepts used in this ruleset hold a specific or technical meaning; those are defined in this section. Any words used in the rules that are not defined herein should be treated as colloquial use. If more than one reasonable interpretation of a colloquial term exists that has measurable impact on the game, it will be determined by consensus of the Officials for that game.

**Apex Jump** An attempt to legally shorten the distance travelled around the curve of the track by leaping over the track boundary and landing back in bounds.

**Assist** Physically affecting a teammate. Common examples include a push or a whip.

**Behind** One thing (for example, a Skater, a line, the Pack) is “behind” another thing, in relation to the track, if it is nearer in the clockwise direction than the counterclockwise direction.

**Blocker** The positional Skaters who form the Pack. Up to four Blockers from each team may skate, per Jam. One Blocker per Jam, for each team, may be a Pivot Blocker.

**Counter-Block** Any motion/movement toward an oncoming block by the receiving opponent designed to counteract an opponent’s block. Counter-blocking is treated as blocking and held to the same standards and rules (except where specified).

**Engagement Zone** The zone in which Blockers are In Play and may legally engage and be engaged. The Engagement Zone extends from 20 ft (6.10m) behind the rearmost Pack Skater to 20 ft (6.10m) in front of the foremost Pack Skater, between the inside and outside track boundaries.

**In Bounds** A Skater is in bounds if the only points at which they are touching the floor are in between the track's boundary lines. Once touching outside the track boundary lines, a Skater is considered to be in bounds again once all parts of the Skater that are touching the ground are touching within the track boundary. A Skater who is touching out of bounds with only a single hand is still considered to be in bounds.

**In Play** A Blocker is in play when they are in bounds and upright within the Engagement Zone. Jammers who are in bounds and upright are always in play.

**Star Pass** The act of transferring Jammer status, which is accomplished by the Jammer handing their helmet cover (the Star) to the Pivot.

**The Star** The Jammer helmet cover, which has two stars on it, one on each side.