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### What is roller derby?

Roller derby is a contact sport played on quad roller skates around a flat, oval track. It was invented in the 1930s in the USA and enjoyed substantial worldwide popularity in the 1960s and 70s. Since 2001, roller derby has been revived as an all-woman, grassroots sport with a distinct feminist edge. There are now roller derby leagues functioning in Australia across most states and territories.

The game evolved from formation speed skating and involves two teams of five women skating around a tight track, gaining points by overtaking opposing players. Derby skaters are serious athletes who train two or more times a week and wear full protective gear including knee and elbow pads, wrist guards, helmet and mouthguard.

### What is the Perth Roller Derby league?

The Perth Roller Derby league (PRD) formed in early July 2008 and now boasts more than 30 skaters, coaches and referees. PRD is a not-for-profit incorporated association run by the skaters, for the skaters and dedicated to organising and promoting the sport of women's flat track roller derby in the Perth metro area. Our aim is to facilitate a group of passionate women dedicated to roller derby as a legitimate roller sport. We are committed to maintaining high safety standards and developing skills and athleticism. We value the sense of fun and individuality that roller derby represents, while promoting teamwork as an essential factor for success.

PRD operates under a Constitution that sets out rules for the organisation. PRD members are expected to abide by a Code of Conduct, and adhere to policies in relation to harassment, pregnancy and grievance resolution. For more information check out [www.perthrollerderby.com.au](http://www.perthrollerderby.com.au) > Official Documents.

### How do I get started?

So you wanna be a rollergirl or a referee? Nice choice! PRD will be starting its Fresh Meat Intake on **Thursday February 4<sup>th</sup> 2010**. Our Fresh Meat program will be about 8 weeks of beginner derby skills classes to teach wannabe rollergirls and referees everything they need to know! It is a good idea that you attend every week during the two months so that you learn enough to get through the skills testing held during the intake.

The skills testing will determine what level of skating you are at – 1, 2, 3 or 4 – and where you need us to give you a little more assistance. If you don't do as well in your testing as what you thought you would, don't worry, learning to skate is tricky and it takes some people a little bit longer than others to master. We won't turn you away from PRD if you are not the fastest thing on 8 wheels!

It's a good idea to try to get as confident on wheels as you can before February rolls around. The best way to do this is to head to Learn-to-Skate classes at Morley Rollerdrome. And they are on:

- Wednesday night: 7-9pm public social skate, 9-10pm adult Learn-to-Skate class, \$12 (includes skate hire). These classes are not affiliated with any league, they are run by Morley Rollerdrome.
- Saturday and Sunday mornings: 9-10am learn to skate class, 10-12noon public social skate, \$12. Beware, there are bound to be small children at the weekend classes, but it's still a great place to learn, and you'll need to learn how to skate around obstacles at some point!

All of the Learn-to-Skate classes at Morley are coached by Rock-on Ron, who coaches PRD training sessions weekly and has over 30 years experience teaching people to roll!



### What kind of equipment do I need?

You won't need equipment to start out with – the cost of hiring roller skates is included in the cost of the Learn-to-Skate classes, and you'll be learning skating skills (not derby skills), so padding and helmets aren't required at these classes.

When the Fresh Meat classes start in February, the real fun begins, and you'll need your own helmet, mouth guard, wrist guards, elbow pads and knee pads. PRD has a strict no-safety, no-skate rule – you won't be allowed to train without all your gear at every session!

The Fresh Meat classes will be held at Morley Rollerdrome, so you'll still be able to hire skates, but once you make your way through the ranks to become an Intermeat skater, you'll need to own your own skates because not all of our training venues have hire facilities. Roller derby is played on quad roller skates, so no, you can't wear inlines!

You can buy safety gear from most skateboarding shops – ProTec, Triple8 and 187s are all good brands. Check out Beyond Skate in Morley or Whitfords City, Hockey Action in East Vic Park, Momentum Skate Shop in Fremantle or Claremont, Outer Limitz in Perth, or Star Surf & Skate in Perth to name a few.

Boil and bite mouthguards are available from most chemists or sports shops, but a dentist-made guard is probably best if you're sure you're in to derby for the long haul.

Most derby girls buy their skates online and PRD is sponsored by [www.sincityskates.com](http://www.sincityskates.com). If you're keen to try before you buy, ask a derby girl if you can try on her skates! Ozzy at Morley Rollerdrome, Tony at Rollaways O'Connor and Ben at Hockey Action all stock a limited selection of derby skates.

### How much does derby cost?

For quality safety gear you're probably looking at an outlay of about \$200 all together. This seems like a lot, but it's much cheaper than physio, dental work or knee reconstructions! Remember to correctly fit each piece of padding as some people need different sizes for each limb, this means that those cheap knee, elbow, wrist one-size-fits-all padding packs are not the best option.

Skates cost anywhere from about AU\$200–\$500, depending on quality, and where you buy them from, but don't feel that you need to buy these until a bit further down the track. Shop around too, local, national and online; sometimes they are cheaper if you do a little bit of research – you might be able to get a discount if you order all of your Fresh Meat gear at once from the same store.

PRD Membership includes a \$15 one-off joining fee, \$25 for your first year's SkateWA membership (this is how we cover you with insurance!), and regular dues of \$55 per month to cover the cost of training venue hire and coaches.

There's no need to be a PRD Member to attend the Learn-to-Skate classes, but once Fresh Meat time rolls around in February you'll need to join up so you are insured.

### Does roller derby have rules?

Yes! Over 40 pages of them! PRD plays by the internationally recognised rules of the Women's Flat Track Roller Derby Association (WFTDA). Check em out at [www.wftda.com](http://www.wftda.com).

Rules learning forms a regular part of derby training, but sitting down and having a read is a good place to start! Don't worry if it doesn't make sense now, after you have been involved in roller derby for a few months go back and reread them and see how much sense they really make now!

### What should I expect over the first 12 months?

Derby is an athletic contact sport. Before you can learn to block and hit, you need to learn how to skate and fall. Unless you're a super-woman skating machine (most of us certainly weren't when we started!), this isn't going to happen overnight! It will probably take 3–6 months of training 2–3 times a week before you'll develop the skills to be able to scrimmage safely, and another 3–6 months after that before you'll be bout ready. There's also the small matter of 40+ pages of rules to learn... Don't worry though, it's all part of the derby experience, and well worth the wait if you stick with it!!



### **Can I get involved in the running of the league?**

Yes! PRD is run by the skaters, for the skaters, so to keep this show on the road we need skaters to contribute to everything from league management to bout organising, fundraising, coaching, refereeing and promotions. PRD is run by a Management Committee made up of skaters that are elected at an Annual General Meeting each year, but there are numerous sub-committees that are always looking for volunteers!

### **What's a derby name, and when can I have my own?**

Derby names are an important part of creating your derby persona, and good fun to come up with! Derby names are integral to a skater's identity, and no name can be used that has been used elsewhere in the world without permission. Check out the International Register of Derby Names at [www.twoevils.org/rollergirls](http://www.twoevils.org/rollergirls) for more information. Once you have joined PRD and met your training requirements for a few months, you can submit your desired derby name and number to [secretary@perthrollerderby.com.au](mailto:secretary@perthrollerderby.com.au), and PRD will contact the register on your behalf. PRD is home to names like Dirty K.O., Di Hard, Freyda Nuffin, Posh Slice, Minnie Screwdriver, General Justice and Tora Hymenov...what will your derby name be?!

### **Where can I find more information?**

[www.perthrollerderby.com.au](http://www.perthrollerderby.com.au) – Our official website! Sign up to join in on forum discussions with your local derby girls!

[www.wftda.com](http://www.wftda.com) – The official website of the Women's Flat Track Roller Derby Association. Download the rules of the game here!

[www.sincityskates.com](http://www.sincityskates.com) – The best place to get skates and gear online. PRD Members get discounts! Hit it while the Aussie dollar is strong!

[www.twoevils.org/rollergirls](http://www.twoevils.org/rollergirls) – The international register of derby names. Check it out for guidelines on choosing a name, and to make sure your bright idea isn't already taken!

<http://z4.invisionfree.com/rollerderby> – The Australian Roller Derby Forum. This is an awesome forum that is full of information about all things derby. Great place to log in and meet members of other Australian derby leagues! All your questions about rules, equipment and doing it derby style can be answered here!

If you have any other questions please send us an email to [enquiries@perthrollerderby.com.au](mailto:enquiries@perthrollerderby.com.au).

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### **Some more FAQs**

#### **When is the season?**

The bouting seasons will vary from year to year, depending on what we have planned in the off season. For 2010 it will start in late May and end in November.

#### **What night will Fresh Meat be on?**

Thursday nights in February and March 2010 at Morley RollerDrome, starting at 6pm. It is a good idea that you attend every week during the two months so that you learn enough to pass your skills testing. The skills testing will determine what level of skating you are at by the end of the intake, there is no pass or fail, just what level are you – 1, 2, 3 or 4?

#### **What about if I need to take extended time off next year?**

It will all depend on how much time and when. If it is during Fresh Meat it will possibly affect your tryout. At any other time it will affect your development as a derby skater, *but if you put in the hours it may not affect you much at all*. Please speak with someone on the committee if you are concerned about your availability for next year.



**Are there only 2 teams?**

At the moment there are only 2 teams in PRD: the Mistresses of Mayhem (green and black) and the Bloody Sundaes (red, black and white). There are other leagues starting up in WA, but at the moment they are still in their early stages. Some leagues on the east coast have only just introduced a third team to their league and they are a few years (and league numbers) ahead of us at the moment!

**How many in each team?**

A full team will consist of 20 grrls. A roster for a bout is 14 grrls. At the moment in PRD we have less than 10 grrls in each team. So it will be a little bit longer before we introduce a third team.

**Do refs train with the grrls?**

Yes refs do train with us, it is the best way for them to increase their fitness and reffing skills and to get to know the grrls, and of course their bad habits! The refs need to be as good a skater as the derby grrls!

**How good a skater do I need to be?**

We can teach you from absolute beginner level to advanced skater level. However, you will benefit from the experience of roller derby more if you already know some of the basics. Most skating rinks provide learn-to-skate classes so give your nearest one a call.

**Do we need to know how to speed skate and skate backwards?**

No. Speed is practically essential if you want to be a jammer (but remember the story of the tortoise and the hare?) Skating backwards is good to know for your confidence, but not essential for the track.

**The Sat and Sun morning sessions at Morley, are they the same Star Classes from when I was a kid?**

Yes they are!! But they are a great starting point to get your skating legs back again – and weaving skills as you dodge the younger kids! Our derby coach Rock-On-Ron also leads the Star 3 and 4 classes.

**What fees and membership do I need to pay for Fresh Meat?**

There is a once-off \$15 admin fee for PRD. An annual \$25 SkateWA membership fee. And ongoing monthly/quarterly dues which pay for our coach and venue hire. Refs pay \$25/month whilst derby grrls pay \$55/month.

**Is there a limit on the number of Fresh Meaters in the intake?**

No. We have a number of league grrls who will be helping to conduct the Fresh Meat sessions so everyone's different skating levels should be catered for.

**Where can I get parts for my skates?**

You can find bits and pieces locally at some of the skate shops, ops shops, quokka/garage sales, etc., or you can shop online overseas or in Australia. There are a number of derby owned-and-run online shops. The best advice we can give you is to do your research on the parts and prices before you commit to buying them. You can always jump onto our forums and ask us questions too, you'll get lots of different answers due to people's personal preferences, but we should be able to help ([www.perthrollerderby.com.au](http://www.perthrollerderby.com.au)). Or get onto the Australian Roller Derby Forum <http://z4.invisionfree.com/rollerderby> – this is an awesome forum that is full of information about all things derby. Great place to log in and meet members of other Australian derby leagues! All your questions about rules, equipment and doing it derby style can be answered here!



**I work a FIFO/shift roster, how will that affect my chances in Fresh Meat?**

This will completely depend on your situation. It is best if you contact us to talk about it ([enquiries@perthrollerderby.com.au](mailto:enquiries@perthrollerderby.com.au))

**Does it matter if I don't have toe stops on my skates?**

Nope. A number of grrls prefer to not have toe stops. It comes down to personal choice. And it doesn't matter if you wear artistic boots either! As long as what you are wearing on your feet are quad roller skates (for derby girls) and not anything else you'll be fine. Only refs are allowed to wear inline skates if they prefer.

**What is the training commitment for refs?**

At least 4 training sessions a month, and as many as possible in the lead up to a bout. You'll also need to know the rules which will require extra time to read, and re-read, and read again!