

# MISSISSIPPI VALLEY MAYHEM NEWSLETTER

MVM's First Newsletter for the Skaters, by the Skaters!

December 2009 Volume 1



## Featured Derby Girl of the Month ★ Cassie Russell ★

### *You're a Derby Girl?*

By Cassie Russell

I think we've all heard it. You're talking to someone and the topic of derby comes up (let's face it, we're all addicted and it always comes up). Once the other person is let in on our little "secret" we are met with astonished looks and questions. The most common of these questions being "what is derby/there's derby in town?" and "You play roller derby?" You begin to anticipate these questions and we all love letting the unknowing into the world that we love so much. As far as the second question goes, for me, my answer is usually "well yeah" as if it would be absurd if I were not. It is this second question which makes me wonder, who is a derby girl?



In our own team it is apparent that there is no such thing as a "typical" derby girl. Our little family is made up of students,

parents, teachers, artists, and more. We've got ladies with tattoos, piercings, and edgy hair; and we've got girls without. Some members love to go out downtown and party till the place closes while others would much rather stay in and watch a movie. So with all of these differences how is it that we have all been drawn to the rink and, despite our many differences and become the family that we are.

I believe I found the answer looking across the flat track on a Sunday. On the rink we are not labeled by our home life or our careers, instead we are all strong women. Not muscular strength, but inner strength. We are determined. We are passionate. We are here doing something for us, something that we love. And we're doing it alongside 30 other women who love it just as much as we do. We get knocked down, but we get back up and keep going. These are the things that bring us together. We are drawn to each other. We feed off of each other's passion and determination This Strong, Determined, Passionate woman that our sport and our team helps us to become, this is a derby girl. [★]

## Top Five Items To Get Your Derby Girl For Christmas

By EmaLeethal

### 1. New Wheels.

Everyone is curious about surrounding people who have the new wheels to see how they are. This is a fabulous gift to get your derby girl in your life.

### 2. 187 Knee Pads.

Everyone seems to be having knee problems lately; from PLC injuries to swollen and bruised up knees. These knee pads are recommended by derby girls all around, especially North Star.

### 3. Roller Derby Garb.

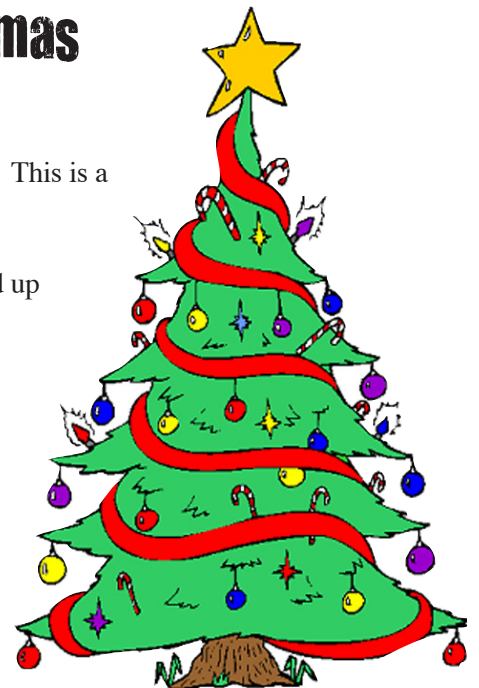
Every lovely lady needs some derby garb. Shirts, stickers, buttons, and things that say, "eat, sleep, derby"!

### 4. Hot Pants!

Hot pants, or derby skinz, are always a good choice for everybody. They come in different sizes, colors, and patterns.

### 5. New Mouth Guard!

The customized mouth guards are a little pricey, but compared to the thousands of dollars it could cost for dental reconstruction from a mishap, the low hundreds don't sound that bad anymore! [★]



# WHEELS! WHEELS! WHEELS!

## Which Wheels Are Right for Me?

By Kayla SMASH!

We're all new to derby... A lot of us are still on our first set of wheels. Some of us are still using the wheels that came with our skates. So when you're ready for some new wheels, how do you choose what wheel is right for you?

After research it can still be incredibly confusing. Some people say an aluminum hub is the way to go, or that grippy is better than hard, or some swear by a hollow hub. The thing is...they are ALL right! There is no one right answer for all skaters. It all depends on who you are as a skater and what you are skating on. This article will hopefully demystify which wheel will work for you by explaining the hardness and hubs of wheels and how position and build will affect how your wheels work for you.

First, durometer or the hardness of the wheel is a very important aspect of choosing a wheel. The durometer of a wheel is rated by a number followed by the letter "A" (the "A" indicates the scale for the material used to make skate wheels, so really, it doesn't concern us.) Now what exactly does 96A, 88A, etc. mean? It means the hardness or softness of the Poly Urethane used to make the wheels. A lower number indicates a softer wheel (88A), and a higher number indicates a harder wheel (96A). These ratings are typically less than perfect from one wheel brand to the next, but they can be a great estimation to start your search for the proper wheel.

Which durometer you choose will mostly depend on where you skate. If a skater is on a floor like coated wood it is going to be very sticky. The skater would want to counterbalance that with a harder wheel. And the opposite works as well, so if the floor is very slick, a stickier wheel will work best. When purchasing a wheel, just keep in mind the floor you'll be skating on, but if you've never skated on the floor before, ask someone who does skate on the floor what kind of wheels they use and what others on their league use.

Now you're thinking, this information makes sense, but I still don't know which hardness will work for me! So first, we skate at High Roller, which is a coated concrete floor. There are a few different aspects that may affect the floor's surface such as when it was cleaned and weather. But usually, the coated concrete floor at High Roller is in the middle area of the hard/sticky surface scale. This narrows it down a little for you. You won't want the hardest wheels (95-96A) because chances are, you'll slip on the corners too much, but you also don't want the stickiest wheels (88-89A) because you'll lose your speed. So next, you'll need to look at what position you typically play or the position you are striving to achieve.

Jammers typically want a wheel that is harder than a blocker would want. Harder wheels create less friction with the floor and allow the wheels to move faster. Although, going too hard



at High Roller will leave you slipping all over the corners. Sometimes this can be a good thing (WHAT?). Yes, a good thing (to a certain extent anyway). It pushes you as a skater to crossover faster and more often to avoid the slipping, and once you've become accustomed to your new wheels you'll be even faster than you were before because you're crossing over more rapidly and you won't be slipping at all!! As I said though, only to a small extent will this be a good thing.

When it comes to blockers, you'll have all eights on the floor most of the time, and you want a little more grip with the floor because typically you're not going for speed, you're going for power, accuracy, and stability. If your wheels are too hard (or really worn down), you're going to be slipping and missing those perfect hits!

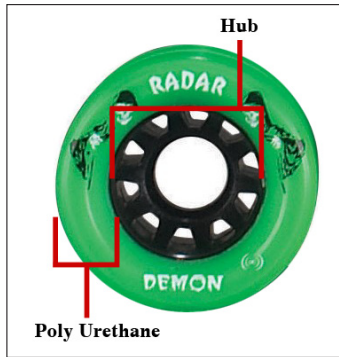
But then there's something else to complicate matters... A wheel that is hard for a small skater will not be as hard for a larger skater. Why? Body weight plays part of the role in the friction between the floor and the poly urethane of the wheel and the way they react. More body weight means the wheel will feel softer compared with someone who is lighter.

Because of this, another important aspect of choosing wheel hardness for both positions is build. The skater that is barely 5 feet tall and weighs in at less than a buck (100lbs) won't have the body weight to keep a harder wheel from slipping everywhere. Basically there's not enough gravitational force for a hard wheel to grip the floor. A tiny skater will need a softer wheel than their taller, heavier counterpart. The opposite is also true. The skater who is a powerhouse of mass and muscle will want a harder wheel. Having a wheel that is much too soft in comparison with body weight can be the equivalent of skating on marshmallows. The skater will be squishing the wheel into the floor and won't be able to get the momentum for speed or the quickness for agility with a grippy wheel.

Besides the hardness of a wheel, it's also important to think about the hub when choosing a wheel that's right for you. The hub is the middle part of the wheel that holds the bearings in place and serves as the support of the wheel. Most of the weight you put on your wheel will be absorbed by the hub. When ▶

**(WHEELS! Continued from Page 2)**

you put most of your weight on the left side of your skates, your weight is interacting with the trucks to pull your skates to the left, but it's also interacting with the poly urethane of the wheel and the hub of the wheel. Your hub will flex and bend with your weight to help you make those quick cuts across the track. There are three basic hubs



available: Aluminum, Nylon/Plastic, and Hollow Core. Again, position and build will determine which one is right for you.

First off, the Aluminum hub. It's heavier and definitely sturdier than a Nylon or Hollow Core hub. Therefore, it takes more weight and pressure for the Poly Urethane of the wheel to interact with the hub. If a skater doesn't have enough weight to weigh down the hub, it won't flex, and then they will not be able to cut across the track as quickly which causes them to lose agility. When a wheel has an aluminum hub, even if the durometer rating is the same as a wheel with a nylon hub, the wheel with an aluminum hub will be harder because the hub will not flex as much when weight and pressure are put onto it because the aluminum hub it is more resilient than a nylon hub.

So who is the aluminum hub right for? That kick ass, powerhouse of mass and muscle! For this skater the aluminum hub means more stability, power, and agility. Where a smaller skater might lose agility from an aluminum hub because of the weight of the wheel and the lack of weight to create that interaction with the

hub and poly urethane, a larger skater will gain agility because they will have the right ratio of weight and muscle vs. the sturdiness of the aluminum hub.

The next hub is a Nylon or Plastic hub. These aren't exactly the same, but they are pretty similar. These hubs are very flexible... maybe too flexible for the powerhouse skater of muscle especially if they are skating on a softer wheel. These hubs are generally light, especially the plastic ones, so they make a great hub for a tiny jammer because they won't lose speed and energy from a heavy wheel. When the hub of the wheel is soft, it causes the wheel to be softer as well. So a really soft wheel with a Nylon or Plastic hub will be too soft for most of us skating at High Roller.

The last hub is a Hollow Core hub. With this hub, instead of having plastic or nylon spokes, it is hollow. This hub has the lightness of a nylon or plastic hub, but with some of the sturdiness of the aluminum hub. Because it has the sturdiness of aluminum but is very light weight, this hub is great for getting more speed. This hub can work for most skaters of any position or build when the wheel has the right durometer.

I'm hoping this information has been helpful; if you have any questions; please feel free to email me. An awesome way to find the best wheel for you is to try them out. Go to an open skate with some other skaters on the league and trade wheels. This is a great way to test out wheels without buying them only to find out they aren't right for you. Also, just keep in mind that these guidelines are just my interpretation of proper wheels after reading many different articles about wheels. They are mere guidelines to help you on your quest for your perfect wheel! (★)

## Renegade Derby

### So what's the Difference?!

By EmaLeethal

So I'm sitting at my computer and searching for the differences in renegade roller derby and keep getting bits and pieces from the teams that actually play this hard hitting sport. The Renegade Roller Girls split off from another Arizona team in the summer of 2004 because they wanted a faster pace, full contact, bad ass hitting sport.

There are apparently no penalties like the roller derby we play. They can jump, slide, different whips, and tackles. If you watch these renegade girls they are grabbing, tearing down, and getting into fights. One girl explains the fights and says that she's not out to get her into a hospital, but instead gets a little angry and gets her aggression out with fighting. This is legal, but I think you can only go so far with it and are broken up with minutes. There are not penalties for fighting. There are no refs required. These bad ass ladies have played on surfaces such as parking lots, tennis courts, concrete, and bank tracks. There are officially seven of these Renegade leagues in the nation. Watching videos showed me that they love the sport for all the right reasons and is a huge part of their lives. (★)

## VS.

## Derby Lite

By Maura Tyranny

If you are reading this article, you are probably one of the many people who have discovered a true love for Roller Derby. Although MVM is only in its second season, as a league we have seen an amazing amount of community support and acceptance as well as an intense excitement from women of all ages and backgrounds to put on a pair of skates and start practicing. Even though Roller Derby is relatively new development here in the greater La Crosse Area, the sport itself has been around for over 80 years. In that time leagues have risen and disbanded, but in their wake there is a grassroots love of roller derby that has moved right into the 21st century. It is a hard hitting contact sport that definitely leaves its mark; on your heart and your booty!

What about the women who love the sport and want to play, but can't risk the possible serious injuries that sometimes occur? Well, they are in luck because in 2007 Barbara Dolan, a former Windy City Roller (aka Queen B) started Derby Lite! Derby Lite is a modified version of Roller Derby that takes the physicality of the sport and makes it easier for women who may not be able to keep up with competitive derby. The contact is lighter, but the fun, community and personality (★)

**(Derby Lite Continued from Page 3)**

remains true to what we experience at MVM practices.

Derby Lite has seen its membership in the Chicago area double since its inception, and Dolan hopes to spread the word of Derby Lite from coast to coast! To achieve this goal, Dolan recently created a Derby Lite Instructor Training Program that has certified its first three DL Instructors, two from Dead Girl Derby in Kansas City, and one other former Windy City Roller. The certification is open to men and women, and spans a couple of days with an aspiring instructor participating DL practices and eventually leading a part of the practice.

Besides the lighter contact and the emphasis on pick-up games rather than public bouts, Derby Lite players still work as hard as traditional roller girls. Derby Lite players still have to wear all safety equipment, including a helmet and knee, wrist, and elbow pads. Their practices meet twice a week for two hours and recently moved into their new community athletic practice space in Oak Park, Illinois. Dolan and Derby Lite Co-owner Trina Bockus worked with the owner of a vacant building at 18 Chicago Ave, to renovate the space to be appropriate for indoor sports activities. The space is rented as a time share, and is available to other area groups to use. Derby Lite is using this space to promote practice, Derby Lite technique classes, as well as a junior derby league for children ages 7 to 12!

For more information, visit [www.derbylite.org](http://www.derbylite.org) or check out the awesome article about Derby Lite in the December/January issue of BUST! [www.bust.com](http://www.bust.com). [★]

**General Derby News!**

By Maura Tyranny

**November 13-15 The 2009 WFTDA National Championship** was held in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania:

The leading 12 WFTDA Roller Derby teams competed, but only one came out to win the Hydra Trophy!

Congratulations to the Oly Rollers, of Olympia, Washington, the 2009 National Champions.

The Oly Rollers beat the Texas Roller Girls of Austin, TX 178 to 100.

**MVM News and Events!**

**New MVM Logo Voted On!!!** (see new logo below)

**December 6th - Fight Before Christmas**

First bout of our second season!

**December 8th - All Skater Meeting @ Northside Library**

**December 10th - North Country Steak Buffet Fund raiser**

**December 17th - Burger King Fund raiser**

**December 19th - MVM vs. HCRD in Duluth**

**January 10th - MVM vs. NSRG's Violent Femmes**

**Contacts**

To Contribute to next month's newsletter:  
EmaLeethal at [rudert.emily@yahoo.com](mailto:rudert.emily@yahoo.com)

**Board Members**

**Training: Dani Rockets**

[training@mississippivalleymayhem.com](mailto:training@mississippivalleymayhem.com)

**Bout Production: The Ambusher**

[boutproduction@mississippivalleymayhem.com](mailto:boutproduction@mississippivalleymayhem.com)

**Public Relations: AngHella**

[publicrelations@mississippivalleymayhem.com](mailto:publicrelations@mississippivalleymayhem.com)

**Sponsorship: Da Barge**

[Sponsorship@mississippivalleymayhem.com](mailto:Sponsorship@mississippivalleymayhem.com)

**Recruiting: Slameo**

[recruiting@mississippivalleymayhem.com](mailto:recruiting@mississippivalleymayhem.com)

**Marketing: Kayla SMASH!**

[marketing@mississippivalleymayhem.com](mailto:marketing@mississippivalleymayhem.com)

**Finance: No Apologies**

[finance@mississippivalleymayhem.com](mailto:finance@mississippivalleymayhem.com)

**Skater Rep: Jess**

[skaterrep@mississippivalleymayhem.com](mailto:skaterrep@mississippivalleymayhem.com)



**S T A Y D E R B Y !**