

# Roller Dodge

“Roller Dodge” is the official name for International Indoor Roller Dodgeball  
(Version 1.1 – July 2009)

## ***Intro***

This document uses the following abbreviations:

Roller Dodge will be referred to as **RD**.

“Traditional” (on-foot) Dodgeball as you remember playing in school or seeing in the film starring Ben Stiller, will be known as **TD**

Roller DERBY will be referred to simply as “**derby**” regardless of the many current variations being played (i.e. women’s modern flat track, old school banked track, etc.)

## ***History of the Game***

RD was created by Ref Tom Green in December 2007. Tom has been involved with WFTDA derby since 1Q 2005. RD was originally conceived as new sport that could be played by a wider range of skaters. The game is intentionally designed to be less dangerous than derby. Unlike derby, RD allows no physical contact between opposing teams. RD takes advantage of existing derby flat track layouts and with a few added tape lines on the floor, RD can be played in the same space and using some of the same boundaries. Tom expects that RD will initially appeal to derby skaters, coaches and referees who may wish to play something fun and different between rounds at derby tournaments or perhaps as an exciting alternative to drills and exercises during practice sessions.

## ***The RD Website***

**RollerDodge.com** picks up where this document leaves off. The rules that appear below are deliberately kept short. **Rules explanations and clarifications** can be found online. Additionally the Website can be used to find an ever growing list of links to skating rinks, RD leagues, teams and players seeking teammates or opponent, places to play and news about future tournaments. RD also maintains a **MySpace** page as one more way to connect to other skaters and fans.

# The Basic Rules

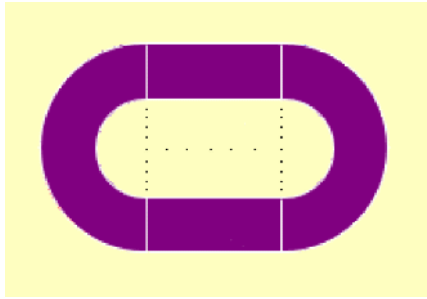
## ***Court Layout***

Readers who are familiar with Women’s Flat Track Roller Derby (WFTDA) will notice the similarity between the derby track and the RD court. This is understandable and intentional. The developers of RD are active in derby but wanted to play a new game during training practice time and they wanted to take advantage of the existing track.

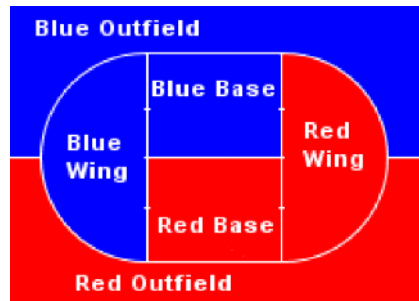
The official dimensions are not *exactly* the same as derby. But they are close enough. If you are fortunate to already have a WFTDA track layout at your local skating rink you can play RD by simply adding a few tape lines on the floor and/or setting up a few 'traffic cones" to mark different sections.

An important thing to realize about RD is that it uses all the space in the skating rink (not just the track part). The concept is similar to golf. Using the soft foam balls in RD should keep most of

the action close to the track because the balls just don't roll very far. However, just as in golf, if the ball should go too wide, too long or even bounce off of a spectator it is still in play.



In derby both teams share the same area as they skate around. Skaters can knock opponents off the track.



In RD each team gets half of the track and infield as their territory. They also use half the outside area to retrieve balls and return them to play.

More information about setting up the RD track is available on the Website [RollerDodge.com](http://RollerDodge.com)

## **Teams**

1. Teams are made up of five skaters.
2. All five skaters are active throughout the game. No one 'sits on the bench'.
3. Optionally a team may include up to two alternates who can be used as substitutes if a regular player is not available for a game.
4. Teams may have a non-skating coach and/or manager

## **Player Positions**

A Skater will start a Round in one of three positions:

- Base Dodger
- Wing Dodger
- Fielder

Base Dodgers and Wing Dodgers are collectively referred to as Dodgers. Both types of Dodgers are allowed to throw balls to send opponents Out.

Three of the teams' skaters start as Base Dodgers. The Base Dodgers may only skate inside their own Base Zone. The 4th dodger is the Wing Dodger. The Wing Dodger skates inside his team's Base Zone AND in his team's Wing Zone. A Wing Dodger must wear a bright colored **helmet cover** to signify his position.

The remaining skater is the Fielder. The Fielder cannot throw the ball. The Fielder cannot be sent 'Out'. In other words it does not matter if an opponent hits a Fielder with a ball. The Fielder may only skate in his own Outfield. The Fielder's job is to gather balls that land in the outfield and carry them back then drop or hand them to the dodgers. They cannot roll or pass the balls through the air.

If a Base Dodger or a Wing Dodger is sent Out, they are momentarily 'Out of Play'. They cannot do anything else until they move into their own Outfield. At that point they take on the position of another Fielder for the remainder of the Round.

## **Rounds**

1. The six balls are divided equally for the **first Round only**. Each team takes three and the skaters move to the appropriate zones for their initial skating position.
2. The Fielder may not start with a ball on the first Round.
3. Three of the four Dodgers (Base and/or Wing) will each hold one ball a piece per team.
4. At the start of every Round all The Wing and Base Dodgers all start in their respective Base zones.
5. The Referee will signal the start of the Round with two short whistles (Tweet Tweet).
6. As soon as the Round starts the Wing Dodger is free to move in either the Base or the Wing zones until they are Out.
7. Each team tries to be the first team to send three of the opponent Dodgers Out.
8. As soon as one Team has only one Dodger remaining, the Referee will signal the end of the Round with four short whistles (tweet tweet tweet tweet).
9. As soon as the Round ends the 15 second count down begins for the Rotation phase.

## **Rotation**

1. After the Round ends, skaters from both teams have 15 seconds to rotate.
2. Only three of the five skaters actually switch positions. The order (i.e. who the Wing Dodge picks to be the NEXT Wing Dodger) can change throughout the game.
3. The Wing Dodger selects one of the three Base Dodgers to replace him. The helmet cover is passed and the prior Wing Dodger becomes a Fielder.
4. The two Base Dodgers that were not selected continue as Base Dodgers again in the next Round.
5. The previous Fielder becomes a Base Dodger for the next Round.

## **Scoring**

1. At the end of a Round, one team (but possibly both teams) will receive one point.
2. The Round ends when either team loses three Dodgers AND there are no thrown balls still in flight.
3. A team always scores one point for sending three opponents Out. This is true even if they lose three or all four of their own Dodgers (in which case the other team will also score one point).
4. If the scoring team has none of its own Dodgers Out, the team gets an additional point for a '**Slam**' (i.e. 2 points total awarded for the Round).
5. The first team to reach 10 points wins the game.
6. In the event of a 10 to 10 point tie game, the next team to score 1 point more than the other team wins.

## **Throwing**

1. Balls are thrown at opponent Dodgers in an attempt to hit them anywhere except the hands and send them Out.
2. Only Dodgers still In Play (not yet Out) may throw a ball.
3. A ball may be thrown overhand (like a baseball).
4. A ball may be thrown underhand (like a softball pitch).
5. A ball may be thrown with one hand.
6. A ball may be thrown with two hands (like a basketball push pass).
7. Tossing the ball up and slapping it (like a volleyball spike is not allowed). This is not a penalty, however the ball is Dead the moment the second hand strikes the ball.
8. A throw is said to start the moment it leaves the throwing skater's hand(s). It then travels through the air for some period of time. The throw ends the moment the ball makes contact with the floor, ceiling, another ball, or any person or other object.
9. After a ball makes contact with someone or something it is Dead and cannot send a Dodger Out until thrown again.
10. While throwing, if a skater steps out of bounds BEFORE the ball leaves his hands then the ball is dead immediately. Additionally, the skater receives an Out of Bounds Penalty as normal.
11. While throwing, if a skater steps out of bounds AFTER the ball leaves his hands then the throw is GOOD. However, the skater still receives an Out of Bounds Penalty.
12. A ball that is caught by a Dodger (in play) may be thrown back immediately.

## **Catching**

1. Catching a ball does not send the thrower Out.
2. Dropping the ball during an attempt to catch it does not send the 'catcher' Out.
3. A Skater who has Taken a Knee ends his penalty if he catches a legally thrown ball. Said skater may stand and resume playing as he was before Taking a Knee.

## **Carrying**

1. Skaters may hold and carry one or more balls. However, a Dodger must drop all balls if they are Out.
2. Balls may be held with hands and arms. The balls may be held against the body if so desired. Holding the ball(s) between the skater's legs or under the chin is not allowed.
3. A skater may hide the ball(s) from view behind his back. Hiding them under clothing (example: under the skater's shirt) is not allowed.
4. A skater may not hold or carry a ball for more than 20 seconds. Doing so will result in a Delay of Game (minor Penalty).

## **Handoffs**

1. Teammates may exchange balls when they are next to one another.
2. One skater can place the ball in his teammate's hand(s). Alternatively, one skater can grab/take the ball from his teammate.
3. Handoffs may cross boundaries between zones. Example: a Fielder can reach with their arms across the line and handoff the ball to a Dodger so long as neither skater touches the

wrong side of the line with their skates. Likewise a Base Dodger can reach across and handoff to the Wing Dodger standing in the Wing zone.

4. Passing the ball (through the air) to a teammate is not allowed.

### ***Dropping the Ball(s)***

1. Skaters may drop balls for any reason with no penalty.
2. If a ball is thrown at an opponent, the ball is Dead as soon as it hits the skaters hand(s). The 'target' skater can either catch the ball or drop it and it does not matter.
3. A Fielder who cannot reach a Dodger to Handoff a ball may simply drop the ball into the Base or Wing zone and then skate away to retrieve another ball in the outfield.
4. When a Dodger is hit Out he **must drop** any balls. Said skater is Out of Play and may not throw or carry balls until he reaches the outfield and becomes a Fielder.
5. When dropping a ball, the hand should be palm down and the skater should simply release the ball. Snapping the wrist, flicking the hand, or other actions used to direct the ball to a spot other than directly down to the floor should be considered an illegal throw/pass.

### ***Picking Up the Ball(s) from the Floor***

1. Skaters may pick up any ball from the floor in their own team's territory so long as they can reach it without stepping out of bounds. If the skater steps out of bounds in the process of picking up a ball he must drop **that** ball back on the floor. He may not attempt to pick up the ball again until a different skater touches it.
2. A Fielder can reach across and pick up a ball from the base or wing zones. A Dodger can reach across the line and pick up a ball from the outfield.

### ***Falling***

1. A Dodger that falls before the end of the Round is Out. This counts toward scoring same as being hit.
2. A Fielder that falls has no effect. Unless injured, the Fielder simply stands and resumes playing.
3. If a Dodger (In Play) Falls while committing a minor penalty (example: stepping out of bounds) the Skater is simply Out and the penalty for the minor is ignored.

### ***Minor Penalties***

A skater who commits a minor penalty must 'Take a Knee'. In other words they stop skating and drop to one knee at the spot where the penalty took place. The skater may bend, twist and stretch but the one knee, in contact with the floor, is not allowed to move more than a few inches from the original spot as a result of these actions. Dodgers that have 'Taken a Knee' can continue to catch and throw balls but obviously their maneuverability is greatly restricted.

**Delay of Game:** A skater may not hold or carry a ball for more than 20 seconds. Doing so will result in a Delay of Game. During rotation skaters must be standing in their correct zone at the end of the 15 seconds. Any skater who is not in the correct area will receive a Delay of Game.

**Stepping out of Bounds:** During a Round, a skater's skate/foot may not touch the floor on the other side of line outside the zone(s) allowed for their current Player Position. This is always a penalty whether the skater does it intentionally or accidentally. This is by far the most common foul. During the Rotation phase skaters are free to cross into any zone on their side of the court. They may not however, cross into the other team's territory. They may not touch a ball that is on the floor in the opponent's territory.

**Passing the ball through the air to a teammate:** Teammates that are beside each other can transfer a ball with a handoff but tossing the ball to one another **through the air** is not allowed.

**Kicking or blocking the ball with a skate:** Skaters must avoid intentionally stopping a rolling ball or bouncing ball with their foot. Likewise they may not swing their leg and kick a ball in order to move it. However, there is no penalty if a skater is hit on the skate by a ball in flight that was thrown at them. Note: This rule is primarily intended to reduce the chance of tears or other damage to the ball should it get caught in, or run over by, a skate.

**Rolling the ball:** Skaters may not use a bowling-like action to move the ball.

**Illegal Catch:** Skaters that are Out of Play may not catch balls. A Dodger that has been hit and sent Out must wait until they have moved to the Outfield and have become a Fielder.

**Hiding behind a Referee:** Skaters may not use the Referee as a shield to keep from being hit by a ball.

## ***Major Penalties***

A skater will be ejected for the remainder of the game in the event of a major penalty.

**Fighting:** The penalty goes to the skater who first crosses into the opponent's territory to make physical contact with another player. The referee has the discretion of also ejecting the skater who was 'attacked' if the referee has reason to believe they provoked the fight with words or gestures. The referee is not required to give the skater(s) a warning before ejecting in this situation.

**Deliberate mutilation of balls:** It is possible that a skater could accidentally fall or skate over a ball and tear it or leave it misshapen. There is no penalty if that happens. However, a skater cannot rip or tear the ball deliberately. They cannot cause the ball to soak up liquids. They cannot intentionally coat the surface with oils, wax, or other materials as in making a 'spit ball' in baseball. The referee is not required to give the skater(s) a warning before ejecting in this situation.

**Reckless Behavior:** Continue disregard for the safety of spectators, staff and other players is not allowed. Nor is the deliberate destruction of physical property. The Referee must give the skater a verbal warning first and only expel the skater from the game if they do not comply.

**Unsportsmanlike Conduct:** The use of Obscene language or gestures is one example of this. Another is the continued disregard for the rules. For example a skater who has 'Taken a Knee' for a minor penalty but intentionally moves around on the floor more than allowed. The Referee must give the skater a verbal warning first and only expel the skater from the game if they do not comply.

**Insubordination toward the Referee(s):** Skaters must comply with referee directions and commands quickly and without excessive arguing. The Referee must give the skater a verbal warning first and only expel the skater from the game if they do not comply.

## ***Timeouts***

Teams do not get to call timeouts. However, there are a number of situations when a referee can call an official timeout...

- Injury to a skater.
- Lost, 'stuck' or damaged ball.
- Skating hazard on the court. Examples: liquid spills, or objects that may cause a skater to trip or fall.
- No balls in play.

## ***Referee Requirements***

- Number of Refs needed for inter-league competition: At least one, no more than two.
  - When two Refs are available, the Ref standing in the 'Red Wing Zone' concentrates on watching the 'Red Skaters' while the other Ref concentrates on watching the 'Blue Skaters'.
  - When there is only one Ref she must watch both teams.
- Referee Certification - Planned for the future.
- Required Gear: Striped shirt, whistle, stopwatch (skates and protective gear are optional for Refs).

## ***Player Self-Policing***

Realistically many sports cannot be played without referees (at least during serious competition). These include derby, Football, and baseball. However, other sports like golf rely on the players to 'police' themselves.

RD is intended to be played closer to the likes of golf and tennis. A Dodger is **expected** to go OUT when he knows he has been hit by an opponent or when he knows that he fell. Likewise, a player is expected to give himself a minor penalty by 'taking a knee' when he realizes he skated out of bounds (crossing into another zone).

In other words, the skater should not wait for the referee to make a call or imposes a minor penalty. Ultimately those players that continually ignore the rules can be 'warned' and even expelled from the game for unsportsmanlike conduct.

Consider golf for a moment. If a professional golfer hits the ball into a water hazard they add an extra stroke to their score. They don't look around to see if a referee noticed.

This is not to say that the Referees will not need to call a skater 'Out'. Ideally this will only be necessary when a skater cannot reasonable be expected to know he was hit. For example, if a Dodger turns and faces away from an opponent (who is throwing) the target skater might be hit somewhere on the back or on the skate and not even realize it. On the flip-side, there may be times when the skaters believe they were hit and the Referee will signal them to return to the game because the ball was in fact already 'dead' when it made contact.

The most common minor foul is a result of a skater unintentionally skating out of bounds. It is very reasonable that many times the skater will barely cross the line without realizing it. If observed by the referee, the skater should be instructed to 'take a knee', but generally the referee should assume the skater did not realize a foul was committed. Therefore no 'warning' should be issued. On the other hand, if a skater crosses the line by several feet, and then tries to cross back into their correct zone without be 'caught' by the referee, this would constitute intentional cheating. In this case the skater *should* be given a warning (after being instructed to go back to the point the line was crossed and 'take a knee').

## **Referee Guidelines**

1. **Safety:** Referees should not hesitate to call an Official Time Out to correct a hazardous situation or to allow an injured skater to seek help.
2. **Keep the Action Going:** Most important *between* Rounds. Start the next Round promptly after the 15 seconds allowed for skaters to rotate positions. Call out the remaining time as the last few seconds elapse if skaters are moving slowly. Use Referee discretion to assign a minor penalty to the worst offenders and/or give verbal warnings. Recommendation: It's more important that the skaters know what is expected and to maintain a sense of urgency between rounds rather than telling everyone to 'take a knee' just because they took 16 seconds to get ready. If a ball is stuck out of reach or damaged, try to remedy the situation between rounds. The current round may continue with less than six balls in play.
3. **Be another Set of Eyes:** This is listed as #3 because the skaters are expected to police themselves in most cases (see section above). However, the skaters cannot see everything. Make your calls accordingly. If a skater thinks they are out but you saw that the ball was dead before it hit them, call the skater back into the game.
4. **Rules Enforcement:** Assign minor penalties as needed. Give at one least verbal warning before expelling a skater for unsportsmanlike conduct.
5. **Expel the Problem Skaters:** You may never have to do this, but if after repeated warnings a skater continues to defy the rules, oust them from the game. Fighting is never permitted. You do not need to give a skater a warning before you eject them if they become violent or abusive.

## **Referee Hand Signals**

Photos and details are available on the Website: [RollerDodge.com](http://RollerDodge.com)

## **Skates**

Players must wear skates. They may wear quads or inline skates.

## **Protective Gear**

For Official Inter-League competition, all skaters must wear the following protective gear: Helmet, elbow and knee pads, wrist guards. Wearing a mouth guard is optional.

## **Uniforms**

One helmet cover is needed per team (similar to those worn by derby Jammers and Pivots). This is used to designate which skater is currently the Wing Dodger. The cover is exchanged when the skaters rotate positions between Rounds. If playing a 'Friendly Game' players can substitute colored Wrist bands to identify the Wing Dodger.

Each skater must wear a shirt/jersey with the player's number on clearly visible on both the front and back. Numbers must be at least 6 inches tall.

## **Foam Balls**

The key to RD is safe **soft** foam balls.

- They don't hurt if they hit a skater or a spectator.
- They will not damage indoor fixtures like ceiling tiles or lights.

Do **not** use foam balls that are covered with a skin like layer of plastic or rubber. Do **not** use dense foam balls. Both types are too heavy and they will roll too far during the game.

Suggestions on where to buy foam balls and links can be found on **RollerDodge.com**

## **Glossary of Terms**

**Coin Toss:** Process of flipping a coin before play begins. Visiting team calls "heads" or "tails". Winner of the toss picks which side of the court they will use until the SIDE SWAP.

**Dead Ball:** status of a ball that cannot send a skater OUT. A Ball is dead the moment after it hits a skater. It is dead if it hits the floor, ceiling or other fixture. It is dead if it touches a spectator. It is dead if it touches another ball in flight.

**Dodger:** A Skater playing this position is allowed to throw and catch during the ROUND. When a Dodger is OUT they must move to the OUTFIELD for the rest of the ROUND.

**Fall:** When a DODGER touches the floor with any part of their body or uniform other than their skates. Usually results in the skater going OUT (see OUT OF PLAY for exception).

**Friendly Game:** A game played amongst friends who are just starting out and learning the rules. Some of the details like enforcing penalties can be ignored until skaters are ready for some serious competition.

**Good Catch:** Catching a ball does not send the throwing skater OUT. However, if a skater has TAKEN A KNEE as a result of a penalty, they can stand and begin skating again if they execute a good catch. The ball must have been thrown by an opponent dodger, still in play, and the ball cannot have hit another skater, floor, ceiling or object before it was caught.

**Out of Play:** A DODGER that is OUT but has not yet left the BASE or WING. The skater does not become a FIELDER until both skates are in the outfield. Out of Play skaters cannot do anything. They may not throw or catch. They must drop any balls they are holding and may not carry them to the Outfield. If they FALL there is no additional consequences because they are already OUT.

**Round:** That period of the game when skaters can skate, catch and throw. Usually one team or the other will gain one point at the end of the Round when enough opponents are OUT. It is possible but unlikely that both teams will receive one point each at the end of a given Round.

**Self-Takeout:** Action whereby a skater removes himself from the game due to injury, illness or equipment failure. The Referee should signal a Time out and restart the next ROUND minus the one skater. It is possible for the skater to return to the game provided they join as a BASE DODGER after sitting out at least one Round.

**Side Swap:** the action when the two teams trade sides of the court. This occurs between ROUNDS once either team reaches five points. Similar to football teams switching goals at halftime.

**Slam:** Scoring two points during a Round by sending opponent DODGERS OUT while keeping all teammate DODGERS In Play.

**Take a Knee:** Position that a skater must assume for minor penalties. Makes it difficult for them to avoid be hit by later throws. A skater can stand if they execute a GOOD CATCH.

**Track:** That part of the court that includes the home base and wing sections. Original dimensions derived from a roller derby track.

**Wing Dodger:** One of the DODGERS given the special privilege of skating in both their BASE and WING zones. WING DODGERS wear a helmet cover to distinguish them from the other DODGERS on their team.

**Zones:** The various areas of the court where different skater positions may or may not be allowed to skate during the ROUND. Skater may skate outside their normal restricted zones during the rotation phase.

### ***Tips and Strategy***

- When throwing, aim low. Many skaters will have difficulty catching the ball if it hits them below the knees.
- Use team work and throw multiple balls at a single opponent from several different directions.
- The Wing Dodger should wait until the right moment to approach the opponents by way of the Wing Zone. But in the right circumstances having the Wing Dodger very close and on the side can be very distracting to the other team.
- Maximize the strength of your team's positions by alternating which skater becomes the next Wing Dodger during rotation.

- If a Dodger does not have a ball to throw, they should move to the back of their zone. While keeping their eyes looking forward toward the opponents, the skater can hold their arm back behind them so a Fielder can easily place a ball in their hand.

### ***Comparing traditional (on-foot) dodgeball to RD***

TD players do not wear skates. TD is played with medium weight, bouncy plastic balls that can sting or leave bruises. TD divides opposing teams into opposite sites of the court but does not assign players to different rolls or positions. In TD you can hit an opponent to send them out of the game or you can catch a thrown ball to do the same. Players who are “out” leave the playing area. TD is played to the last man.

RD players must wear skates (inline or quads). RD uses soft foam balls similar to the original Nerf ® ball (without the plastic skin). The soft foam ball won't hurt even if you get hit directly in the face and is quite safe even for young children. Between rounds RD players rotate positions (somewhat like volleyball), and each position has different restrictions. In RD throwing a ball and hitting an opponent is the primary way to send them “out”. However catching a ball does not send the opponent out. Likewise trying to catch a ball and dropping it has no impact. Skaters who fall are also out (similar to limbo). Players who are out do not leave the game but simply switch positions and become a fielder for the rest of the round. A round of RD is not played until all the opponents are out, but rather until three of the original four dodger positions are eliminated.

### ***Game Philosophy***

Understanding the *vision* behind the game of RD may help skaters make sense of the rules. The creator of the game hopes that future modifications and suggestions for changes will stay true to the original spirit.

Fighting and unsportsmanlike conduct is not tolerated. While some sports like ice hockey and roller derby are known for a certain level of fighting, it is hoped that RD (like golf or tennis) will not.

RD is intended to be an exhausting workout and a test of skater's endurance. Players are expected to keep the action going with little time for resting. This is the reason that the time for rotating positions between Rounds is kept so short.

From the beginning, the game was designed to keep all the players involved as much as possible. That is the reason that skaters are not sent to a penalty box for minor fouls. The consequences are deliberately set small for tiny infractions.

The game stresses the importance of balance, agility, speed and teamwork. Strength (i.e. being able to throw a ball hard), is considered less important for this game.