

BASICS 4 BLOCKERS

'Aww rules! But I just want to skate!' – Why we bother to learn the rules

(All references refer to the May 2010 WFTDA Ruleset available at: www.wftda.com/rules)

Skating is what roller derby is all about and that is why most of our training involves skating.

Skating, hitting, blocking and scoring are the ingredients of great roller derby – the rules tell us how we mix them to make safe roller derby. We want you to get out there and play 'derby with brains'.

This session will give you the basic information you need to get onto the track as a blocker.

Studying the rules:

- ✳ Makes your gameplay safer and more consistent
- ✳ Keeps you out of the penalty box and on the track for longer
- ✳ Helps you work strategically within your team
- ✳ Teaches your brain to work with your body
- ✳ Makes you the best derby player you can be

Rules study ideas from the referees

- ✳ 'Keep a copy of the rules next to the toilet' – Syntax
- ✳ 'Get to know the handsignals and watch what refs call at games that you see, it helps to understand the difference between no impact/minor/major' – Hots Tough
- ✳ 'Try and think of a scenario to stump the refs... find something weird in a local bout or overseas footage and ask why it happened and what the penalty was' – K'lick K'lick Boom
- ✳ 'I don't really learn just by reading I have to see what's happening and be able to find the reference to that in the rules and rules discussions helped so much' – Hots Tough



Who is the blocker and what does she do?

(3. Players, 3.1 Blockers)

- ✳ Blockers play both offensive and defensive at the same time. Each blocker on the track has a specific role which will be explained further by your trainers and captains.
- ✳ A maximum of four blockers from each team can be on the track at any one time, and make up the pack (as long as they are skating in-bounds within ten feet of each other).
- ✳ Ordinary blockers wear no special identification (like helmet covers) and cannot score points. The pivot blocker, who wears a striped helmet cover, can score points in special circumstances which you will learn about later.

Game basics for blockers

(2. Game Parameters)

- ✳ Regulation bouts have **two thirty-minute periods**.
- ✳ Each period is broken down into **jams**, which last for a **maximum of two-minutes**.
- ✳ Referees watch the play and assess players for penalties.
- ✳ Penalties are communicated to players by the **ref's calling them out**, signalling with the regulation **hand signals** and **blowing whistles**.

What whistles should I be listening for?

Jam start – Pack start	One long
Jam start – Jammer start	Two rapid
Lead jammer	Two rapid
Minor penalty	No whistle
Fourth minor penalty	One long
Major penalty	One long
Jam called off/ended	Four rapid

‘AARGH! It is all going terribly wrong!’ – When your rules knowledge works for you

(2.9 Timeouts, 9.2.11 Official review)

The first person to talk to if you have a problem during a bout or scrimmage is your **captain (C)** or **bench manager** (who is usually the alternate designate (AD)).

There are several options for sorting out problems:

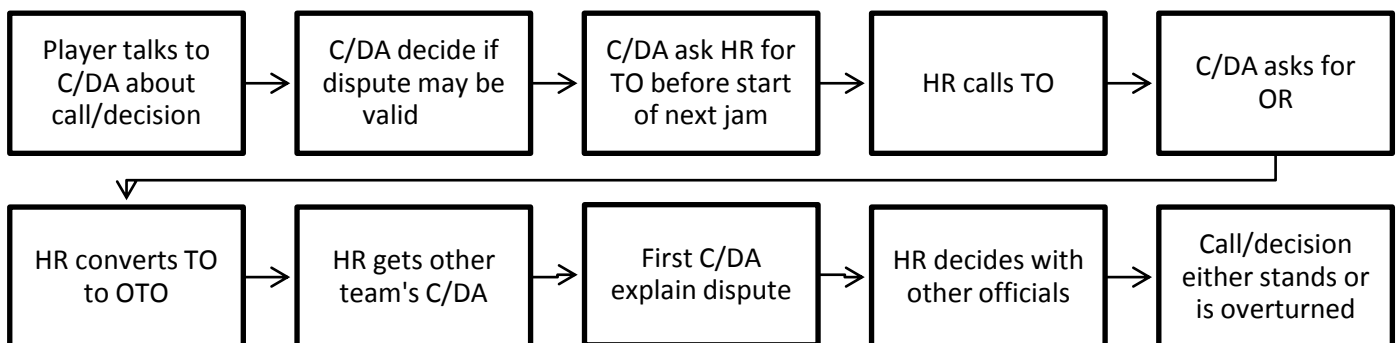
- ⚡ **Timeouts (TO).** Each team gets **three timeouts** per game. Each timeout lasts for one minute. TOs can be used for a variety of strategy and functional reasons.
- ⚡ **Official timeouts (OTO).** The referees can call an official timeout at any time and these can go for an unlimited time. OTOs can be used to fix officiating issues or to do official reviews.
- ⚡ **Official reviews (OR).** Each team gets **one official review per period** where they may ask for a **review of a referee decision**. The OR must be called in the break between jams and **only the jam directly before the break can be reviewed**.

REFS: YOUR LIPS MAY SAY “MAJOR PENALTY” BUT YOUR EYES SAY “SKATE LIKE THE WIND.”



Pic from Facebook, thx Bel

How an official review happens



C = Captain / DA = often bench manager / HR = Head referee / TO = timeout / OTO = official timeout / OR = official review

And where everyone ends up eventually – the penalty box

(7. Penalty enforcement)

Important penalty box stuff to remember:

- ⚡ **Four minor penalties** or **one major penalty** earns you **one minute** in the penalty box.
- ⚡ **Seven accumulated penalty minutes** will **foul you out of the game** and you must return to the dressing rooms.
- ⚡ **Timing of your penalty does not start until you are sitting in the correct seat.**
- ⚡ You must enter the box by skating **around the outside of the track in derby direction** (counter-clockwise).
- ⚡ If the box is full you will **be waved off** and directed to return by the referees when a spot is empty.
- ⚡ The box will be marked with a **line of no return** – if all parts of your skates go beyond this line you will need to skate around the track again and re-enter the box correctly.
- ⚡ Ten-seconds before the end the timer will **direct you to stand**. If you do not stand they will stop timing.
- ⚡ At the end of your time the timer will tell you that you are done. You can leave. **Leaving before you are told to equals another major penalty.**
- ⚡ **Removing any safety equipment** except your mouthguard while **seated** in the penalty box will earn you **another major penalty**.
- ⚡ Once you are done you can skate either direction out of the penalty box, all that is important now is that you **enter behind the pack** or, yep you guessed it, more penalties...