



# WFTDA ROLLER DERBY

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# 2020 IMPACT REPORT

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# Why We Need Roller Derby

## A Few Words From Our Executive Director

In early March 2020, WFTDA leadership convened to talk about how we would address the COVID-19 pandemic. With governments worldwide debating shutdowns, we watched in horror as infections marched across all parts of the globe. As an organization that represents 450 clubs in 33 countries worldwide, it was devastating to watch. But we knew that the WFTDA had to create plans and policies that accounted for the vastly different government responses to the pandemic.

A small team of healthcare professionals—or as I call them, a team of heroes—emerged: our WFTDA COVID-19 Medical Team. Together, we created the most comprehensive, safety-forward guidelines to return to play in amateur sports.

Our approach to COVID-19 was simple but revolutionary, in that our goal was to prevent infections with limited resources. And although we are still rebuilding our sport, collectively we have done something that no other sport has done—manage a return to play with zero sport-related cases of COVID-19 reported to date.

Roller derby made a tremendous sacrifice for the safety of our athletes, officials, and supporters, but also for the communities in which they live and operate. I believe our policies have made a difference, which is what the sport of roller derby has always been about.

Despite the pause in gameplay, the work hasn't stopped. The WFTDA has been advocating for transgender rights in our own community and working to center BIPOC voices. In 2020, we created The ART Project (Anti-Racism Team Project), which compensates and centers BIPOC community members to help our organization increase access and equity in roller derby as we navigate a post-COVID landscape.

The WFTDA has always envisioned a world in which community drives the values of the sport, and keeping this in focus has helped guide us through a challenging time. As many professional sports found out in 2020, you cannot separate the people who participate in a sport from their lived experiences, and their need for safe, equitable participation. The work we do matters, and it strengthens our community's commitment to keeping each other safe.

Honoring that is what sets WFTDA roller derby apart from other sports, and it's why we need roller derby now more than ever.



Erica Vanstone, WFTDA Executive Director



The Women's Flat Track Derby Association (WFTDA) is **the international governing body** for the sport of women's **flat track roller derby** and a membership organization for leagues to collaborate and network.

**f** 96+k  
Subscribers  
& Followers

**Instagram icon** 38.2k  
Followers

**Twitter icon** @WFTDA: 22.7k Followers  
@WFTDALive: 11.6k Followers

# 15

Years in Operation

# 455

**Member Leagues** on 6 continents  
and in 33 countries

# 5

Number of Languages  
our **Rules** are published in

(German, English, French, Spanish, and Chinese)

The Women's Flat Track Derby Association sets the **international standard** for rankings, rules, and competition each year.

The WFTDA governs and promotes the sport of flat track roller derby and **revolutionizes the role of women\* and gender expansive participants** in sports through the collective voice of its members around the world.

The WFTDA **envisions a world in which sports are inclusive**, where women, genderqueer and gender nonbinary participants of all backgrounds are asked to lead and create a safer, more collaborative future for global sport.





# WFTDA Annual Tournament Numbers Pre-2020

Before COVID-19, WFTDA revenue and engagement focused around our international events.

**64,500**

**Tickets sold to Playoffs and Champs since 2012**

**1,400**

**Average Playoff attendees**

**2,400**

**Average Championship attendees**

**Over 1,300**

**Archived Tournament Games** available on our YouTube channel since 2011 for a total of over 1.2M hours watched



# Leading Through the Pandemic

Our **COVID-19 GUIDELINES TO RETURN TO ROLLER DERBY** provide guidance for leagues worldwide on how to assess their local infection rates and pandemic restrictions to know how to safely return to roller derby. These guidelines were highly praised by the press and were requested by many organizations outside the roller derby community.

Over  
**1,100**  
requests and unique downloads  
by organizations such as:

- LEAP Sports Scotland
- Hawaiian Airlines
- Purdue University
- Temple University
- Women's Football Alliance
- USA Cycling
- USRowing
- Special Olympics
- New Orleans East Hospital

# WFTDA Return to Roller Derby Guidelines

As a values-focused organization, the WFTDA put lives before gameplay with our COVID-19 guidelines. We paused our rankings and competition, canceled our events, and assembled a team of medical professionals to develop our **lives-forward return-to-play ladder**.



The [WFTDA COVID-19 Guidelines to Return to Roller Derby](#) set **data-based baseline conditions and offer guidelines** to safely return to play, including when to step up to a new level of activity or step down or off the ladder if conditions worsen. A 14-day waiting period at each step ensures that increased activity does not result in infection within the league. WFTDA members are asked to **report their progress** on a Readiness Map, which helps us monitor roller derby's progress on a global level.

**BASILINE CONDITIONS Required For a League to Begin TIER ONE:**

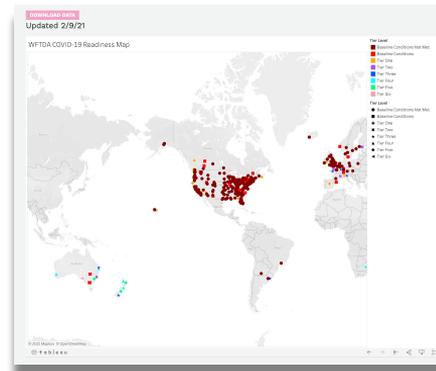
- ✓ Your local government must have official regulations or guidelines on re-socialization that:
  - Remove stay-at-home orders and proximity restrictions;
  - Allow for public congregations of at least 50; and
  - Do not prevent your league from congregating and recreating with non-contact.
- ✓ If your league is in a country with a national governing multi-sports organization, you have permission from that entity to resume roller derby activities.
- ✓ Fully functioning public transportation services in your locality (in a not limited by government assessment of essential services).

The WFTDA also recommends **facilitating yourself with the following general practices** that should restrict overall downward trends for 14 days or more in your region, so that you will be ready to plan for successful meeting of Baseline Conditions:

- Hospital admissions,
- Percent of positive tests, or
- COVID-19 related deaths

⚠️ Please make sure you contact your local department or authority of health to determine the best sources for current data. If your league does not have access to the information above and you are unsure if you meet Baseline Conditions contact WFTDA for consultation.

WFTDA.com/Return Page 7 | August 27, 2020



# Our Guidelines

IN THE MEDIA (Find clippings in our [Press Room](#))

“Roller derby has set the standard on how to return to sport safely in the age of Covid; now it’s up to other sports to meet the challenge.” — WIRED



**BUST** MAGAZINE

**WNYC**

DAILY NEWS

**CBSRADIO**



**WIRED**

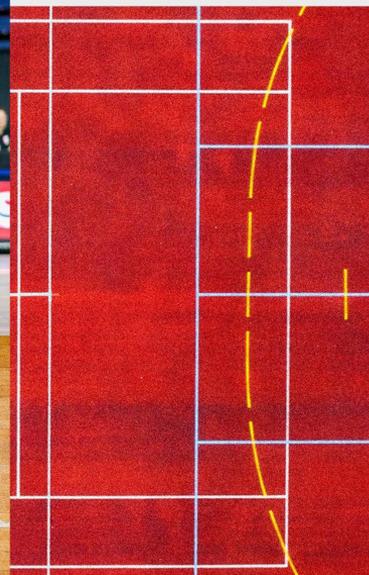


PHOTO-ILLUSTRATION: SAM WHITNEY; GETTY IMAGES

CHRISTIE ASCHMANN IDEAS 07.02.2020 08:00 AM

## Women’s Roller Derby Has a Plan for Covid, and It Kicks Ass

While baseball, basketball, and other sports struggle to adapt, an international team of skater-experts has figured out a safer way to play.

# COVID-19's Economic Effect on Roller Derby

By **putting the community first**, the WFTDA has actively tried to control the spread of COVID-19. Our refusal to contribute to cases by canceling the annual season has led to **substantial financial loss** for the WFTDA and its members.

The WFTDA conducted **two member surveys** in May and September 2020 to **assess the impact of the 2020 COVID-19 shutdown** on our membership.

We then provided **scholarships** to leagues experiencing financial difficulty and **hosted online meetings** to **advise members and event organizers** on how to proceed during the shutdown and where to look for financial support.

# 90%

of surveyed leagues reported **LOSING MEMBERS** or anticipated losing members

# \$6M

**ESTIMATED LOST REVENUE**  
(in US \$) from canceled WFTDA and member-league games and tournaments in 2020 due to the COVID-19 shutdown

# 30%

of WFTDA annual revenue was reduced due to COVID-19, primarily **EVENT TICKET SALES**

# Striving To Do Better:

## Dismantling Racism in the WFTDA

*The WFTDA still has a long way to go in (re)building trust and to truly become an anti-racist organization. Read on to learn about our commitment to equity and some of the actions we've taken so far.*



### Diversity and Inclusion Survey

**In 2020, we sent out a diversity and inclusion survey to our community.**

The results showed that transgender and genderfluid respondents as well as those who are racially minoritized are more likely to have experienced hostile environments and exclusion in their leagues. These respondents report feeling uncomfortable with their league's climate, have considered leaving their league, and report experiencing discrimination.



### Anti-Racism Commitment

**After a harmful response to the death of George Floyd, the WFTDA got called in by our community to do better.**

The Board of Directors released a [statement in June 2020](#) apologizing and committing the WFTDA to becoming an actively anti-racist organization. Shortly after, we updated our Code of Conduct and the accompanying Code of Conduct Toolkit to reflect these changes.



### The ART (Anti-Racism Team) Project

**Centering anti-racism and creating structural change.**

In August 2020, the WFTDA began working on an organization-wide change process called the Anti-Racism Team Project (ART Project), which prioritizes the voices of our BIPOC community members in re-envisioning the sport. Taking stock of where we are as a sport, and projecting where we want to be, the ART Team is working to fundamentally change how we grow.



# Diversity and Inclusion in the WFTDA

Our **2020 Diversity & Inclusion Survey** showed that

- Racial diversity in leagues is reported low. Among all respondents, 77.7% say that "all or nearly all" or "most" people in their league are of their same race/ethnicity; for skaters of racial minority groups, this number drops to only 13.3%.
- Only 35.6% of all respondents have considered leaving their league due to its climate, but this number is much higher for transgender and genderfluid members (51.7%), non-Black People of Color, Indigenous/Native (46.5%), or Black (54.5%) respondents.

Over  
**3,000**  
Survey Respondents

Roughly  
**50%**

say their league has a policy to address reports of discrimination, but only 35.9% say their league has been enforcing them.

**27.1%**

say they have been subject to exclusionary or hostile conduct.

*This number is higher for respondents who identify as non-cisgender (32.6%), non-heterosexual (27.9%), members of a racial minority group (36.9%), or Black (37.3%)*

# The WFTDA Anti-Racism Team (ART) Project

*"In order to achieve our goals to become an anti-racist organization, and to make WFTDA roller derby a safer, more collaborative space for BIPOC members of our community, we need to look at our organization through the lens of those who are affected by our actions."*

[The ART \(Anti-Racism Team\) Project](#)

Our commitment begins with understanding that the WFTDA has been built using systems of white supremacy that have caused and continue to cause harm to our community. **By centering BIPOC community members in this process of change we can more actively work on recognizing and repairing this harm and dismantle policies that are racist and that maintain systems of white supremacy within roller derby.**

# 12

**Panel Members Hired**

# 9

**From**

**Different Countries**

# 5

**and**

**Continents**

**to re-envision membership, governance, and organizational structures.**

The ART Project Team is working with the WFTDA Board, staff, officers, and other key stakeholders, guiding the organization into a new era focused on anti-racist action and intersectional collaboration.

# Concrete Steps to Improve Organizational Culture

In 2020, we updated our [Code of Conduct](#) and [Code of Conduct Toolkit](#), and created an [Anti-Racism Resources and Education Community Online](#). After receiving feedback from the community and questions about where to start in their anti-racism work, we hosted several workshops and created a community workspace where we share our own, and also external resources, like webinar recordings or toolkits.

In order to grow and challenge each other to represent the best of our community, we need to foster a common language and base level of knowledge.



Our Code of Conduct Toolkit has had over **1,684** unique views since its release in September 2019

We have roughly **360** minutes of recorded and purchased webinars

We've created over **85** pages of different materials in just two years, incl. Special Event Standards and Code of Conducts

# Getting Back on Track:

## (Re)building Community, Equity, and Participation

Founded in 2005, the WFTDA has outgrown many of the systems we created to employ a democratic model and we recognize that there is much progress to be made toward making our organization more equitable.

### In 2020, the WFTDA:

- **Opened up its communication platform** to anyone involved in roller derby, to increase participation.
- **Removed barriers** to join the sport with the **new beginners' curriculum** "This Is Roller Derby".
- Created an **virtual community offseason** focusing on **community engagement** in lieu of live games and streaming.





# The WeFTDA Collective



In order to develop and deepen relationships with roller derby participants, the WFTDA created the [WeFTDA Collective](#) — an online community space that aims to break down barriers to information sharing and collaboration. Using a “pay what you can” model for membership, the **WeFTDA Collective is open to all and creates opportunities for our sport to grow and change.**



The WeFTDA Collective is an online community for anyone involved or interested in roller derby.

[Join today!](#)



# Equity in Training and Participant-Centered Development

Coaching people, not sport.

## ONE SIZE DOES NOT FIT ALL

Derby looks different at different levels of the game and for different bodies, roles, and participants.

## GAMEPLAY AT EVERY LEVEL

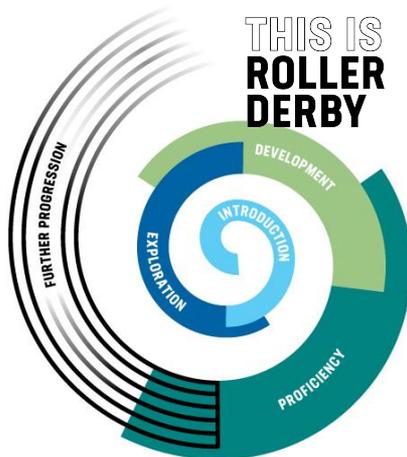
The WFTDA recognizes that every skater and official progresses at their own pace. This should not be a barrier to participation in the game of roller derby.

## ROLLER DERBY IS A SAFE SPACE

Roller derby should be a safe space for participants to train and build a love for sport. Participants should feel confident that they can be themselves and also know that their coaches are mitigating injury through dynamic risk assessments and safe coaching.

## WE PLAY ONE GAME, WE TRAIN ONE GAME

We are a community that learns, works, and plays together. All participants are part of the training environment, whatever their role.



In 2020 the WFTDA created a task force and hired a community expert to **remove barriers to the sport** by eliminating the established Minimum Skills Testing and replacing it with a **new holistic beginners' curriculum**.

Over **40**

people involved in the creation of the program

Over **4,300+**

Unique views since its release

Over **10**

new training resources for coaches

PHOTO BY ANJA WETTERGREN

*In December 2020 we celebrated roller derby on our Twitch channel over three full days (for over 36 hours) with 9,984 live views of throwback games and live shows that the community helped choose.*

# THROWBACK Throudown A VIRTUAL TOURNAMENT



# Community Before Competition

*Transitioning from live gameplay to an virtual community offseason*

Due to the canceled competitive season, the WFTDA and its shows and content team focused on community engagement through regular livestreaming on Twitch, including wellness classes, player interviews, past game recaps, news, community discussions, and call-ins.

**SELF-CARE**  
A WELLNESS SERIES  
WITH BLUE & ROLLI



**GETTING OFF TRACK**

Over  
**230**

hours of **livestreamed** community content since March 2020

**75**

new community-focused videos published on **YouTube** since March 2020

# 2021 and Beyond

## A final note from the President of the WFTDA Board of Directors

15 YEARS WFTDA ROLLER DERBY

The year 2020 put our sport on hold but it was also a powerful call to action, pushing us to recommit to our foundational values of being community-driven and community-focused. During this period of loss and rebuilding, we realized we could never return to the structures that had, for years, marginalized members of our sport.



Teen Vogue  
@TeenVogue

Laws targeting trans athletes have made roller derby a safe haven:



Teen Vogue @TeenVogue

Anti-Trans Lawmakers — Meet the Roller Derby Community

... As roller derby returns in 2021, WFTDA is committed to creating new equitable and sustainable competitive pathways and deeper member engagement, building a community that is welcoming to everyone.

Looking forward, as lawmakers continue pushing anti-trans legislation and other discriminatory policies, we need to continue dismantling barriers for our sport and others. Roller derby can and should take the lead in discussing the rights of [trans and gender expansive skaters](#), pushing back on media outlets or policy-makers who threaten the safety of our communities and who tout discriminatory views.



Dedi Hubbard (deadeye), President of the WFTDA

# The Need for Funding Women Sports

Women's sports are used to doing heavy economic lifting within their own communities and will continue to do so coming out of the pandemic. A recent Deloitte Insights report concluded that, out of the \$44.9 Billion dollar annual sports sponsorship funding, only a fraction of those dollars reach women's sports.

Like roller derby, many women's sports develop with equity in mind and include gender-expansive, transgender, and other under-represented community members. We offer a unique platform to actively address one of the root causes of inequity, specifically the lack of pathways that encourage women-identifying leadership in sport.

WFTDA members and teams — more than 70% of which are nonprofit — often rely on active game play to drive critical revenue. The ability for the WFTDA and our members to host revenue-generating events halted in 2020, putting many organizations in difficult financial positions.

**By supporting the WFTDA, or any of our roller derby member clubs, you're investing in women-led initiatives that center safety, access, community and equity in sport.**

**\*0.4%**

of all global sports sponsorships,  
valued at

**\*\*\$44.9B**

USD go towards  
**WOMEN'S SPORTS**

**\*\*\*5.4%**

of all 2019 televised media coverage  
in the United States represented  
**WOMEN'S SPORTS**

\* [www.womeninsport.org](http://www.womeninsport.org)

\*\* [Deloitte Insights, 2021](#)

\*\*\* [Nieman Foundation, 2021](#)

## Thank you, WFTDA Members

## Thank you, WFTDA Partners

National Governing Bodies  
Men's Roller Derby Association (MRDA)  
Junior Roller Derby Association (JRDA)

## Thank you, Roller Derby Community

## Thank you, COVID Medical Team

Bobbiejean Garcia, MPH, CIC, FAPIC  
Mikaela Kosich, MPH  
Nikki McCorristin, BSN, RN  
JoAnna Castle, Licensed Paramedic, CCP, CP-C, IPC  
Dr. Joseph Stenzel, MD  
Molly Stenzel  
Erica Vanstone  
Karen Kuhn  
Katharina Bohnert

## Thank you, ART Project

Facundo Nahuel Huanuco (Wari) — Sailor City Rollers, Buenos Aires, Argentina  
Tracey Hughes (Dreadlocked N. Loaded) — Kansas City Roller Warriors, KS, USA  
Abigail Tjhay (Wasabi) — Amsterdam Roller Derby, Netherlands  
May-ek Querales-Mendoza — Mexico City Roller Derby, Mexico  
Brittany Bear (Spock) - Roughneck Roller Derby/Team Indigenou, Tulsa, OK, USA  
Danielle Mireles (Dana Skull E.) — Sylmar, CA, USA  
Voon-Li Chung (Vector) — Western Australia Roller Derby, Perth, Western Australia  
Snooky Wong (Karluna) — Hong Kong Roller Derby, Hong Kong - Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China  
Celeste Tortosa (Bella Ciao) —Vienna Roller Derby, Austria  
Iris Bigornia (Viris) — Toronto Roller Derby, Ontario, Canada  
Sakenya McDonald (PeaceMaker) — HARD Roller Derby, Flagstaff, AZ, USA  
Jarral Boyd (Assault N Pepa) — Bear City Roller Derby, Berlin, Germany

# Thank you for putting Lives before Laces with us in 2020





**WFTDA**  
ROLLER DERBY

# 2020

## IMPACT REPORT

**Interested in partnering with us?**

The WFTDA is looking for revolutionary individuals, organizations, and businesses who want to change the sports world.

Let's make sure women's sports and women-led sport organizations survive and thrive in the years ahead.

**Get in touch!**

[wftda.com/partnership](https://wftda.com/partnership)

# Women's Flat Track Derby Association

[Support the WFTDA Today](#)

