

Special for RollerCon 2015

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Flat Track/Banked Track Rules & Strategy Guide

Learn the rules differences

between **WFTDA** Flat Track, **RDCL** Banked Track, and **USARS** Flat Track roller derby with our color-coded chart!

Discover new derby strategies

with our **RDCL/USARS** Strategy Guide on the next pages—click the icon for video breakdowns of key rules!



Watch all the roller derby

by checking the schedule below to see the **RDCL** and **USARS** games happening at RollerCon...then try playing something new at home!

	WFTDA (Flat)	RDCL (Banked)	USARS (Flat)
Jam Length	2 minutes	60 seconds	90 seconds
Scoring ends on the...	4th whistle	1st whistle (of 4)	4th whistle
Pre-Jam Player Positioning	Free formation; Pivot option to take Pivot Line	Pivots & Blockers must start in designated areas	Pivots & Blockers must start in designated areas
Awarding Lead Status after Initial Pass	First Jammer to legally pass all Blockers in-bounds	Always foremost Jammer to pass all opposing Blockers	Always foremost Jammer that emerges 10ft from the Pack
Lead Status Switching	None; locked to Jammer that earned Lead (if any)	Switches to other Jammer after passing Lead Jammer	Switches to other Scorer after passing Lead Scorer
The Lead skater can call off the Jam from...	Anywhere	In-bounds only	In-bounds only, while upright & after passing an opponent
How the Pivot becomes a Jammer	Star Pass	Star Pass	Pivot Break <i>Always after Lead Jammer</i>
Pack Definition	Blockers from both teams in proximity	Blockers from both teams in proximity	Team or largest mixed Blocker group most forward on Track
Pack Proximity	10 feet	5 feet	10 feet
Engagement Zone	20 feet <i>N/A during "No Pack"</i>	20 feet <i>Persists during "Split Pack"</i>	N/A <i>Engagement within Pack Proximity only</i>
Penalties are enforced...	When they happen	After the Jam <i>When they happen, in a declared "Last Jam"</i>	When they happen
Penalty Length	30 seconds	1 Jam	30 seconds
Max Team Penalty Box Capacity	2 Blockers + 1 Jammer + standing Blockers	2 Blockers + 1 Jammer	Any 3 players
When both Jammers go to the Penalty Box...	Jammer "musical chairs" or a brief Jammerless Jam	Players remove helmet covers; both teams field new Jammers	Jam automatically ends <i>Initial Pass/Active Scorers only; new in next Jam</i>
Cutting the Track	Penalty	Penalty	No Penalty; Yield & Recycle
Clockwise Skating & Stopping on the Track	Legal	Penalty <i>Stopping OK if Out of Play</i>	Penalty <i>Stopping OK if Out of Play or yielding</i>
Destruction of Pack	Penalty <i>"No Pack" warning</i>	Legal <i>"Split Pack" warning</i>	N/A <i>A Pack is always defined</i>
Failure to Reform Pack	Penalty after no immediate or sustained attempt to reform	Penalty after 2 seconds of no sustained attempt to reform	N/A
Official Reviews and Challenges	1 per period <i>Review retained if successful</i>	3 per game (max 2 per half) <i>Team time out required; lost if unsuccessful</i>	1 per period

	RDCL <i>Banked Track Games</i>	Every Day 1:30~4:30 p.m.*
	USARS <i>Rules Showcase Game</i>	Saturday, July 25 1:30 p.m. - Track 1



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RDCL Banked Track

Key Rules & Strategies

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Shorter Jams Mean Faster, Harder Action

No time to waste! RDCL Jams last no more than 60 seconds. Due to this added time pressure, **Blockers must engage aggressively on offense** to free their Jammer quickly, or risk running out of time and not scoring. Once out, Jammers must race to beat the clock (and each other) to earn maximum points. **More Jams also mean more initial passes for teams to fight through**, creating more battles for Lead Jammer. Jam resets can even be less than 30 seconds if everyone is ready to play, keeping things moving for fans. This blistering pace means some RDCL games have reached as many as 64 Jams!



“The Slinky Pack”

In the RDCL, **it is legal to destroy the Pack**. When a “Split Pack” is declared, teams must demonstrate an attempt to reform within 2 seconds, or penalties will be issued. This grace period creates an accordion or “slinky” effect in the Pack: The team at the front alternates between speeding up defensively & slowing down to reform. The team at the back is at a disadvantage having to catch up, but can regain Pack control by trapping and holding an opposing Blocker. This is critical in penalty situations. **Even with a Power Jam, teams must play defense to score well**. Containing a Blocker for all 60 seconds will score big points. If a team doesn't block anyone, it may score nothing at all!



Jam-Length Penalties

Any penalties committed during an RDCL Jam are signaled to skaters, **but not whistled**. Players report to the penalty box only at the end of the Jam and **sit for the duration of the next Jam**, regardless of length. (A declared “Last Jam” is an exception; a penalty committed in one will be enforced as it happens.) Be careful! This system makes it possible for skaters to get several penalties in a Jam. Very unlucky skaters may even foul out of the game in as little as 60 seconds!



[Click here](#) to learn more about the **Slinky Pack** in our video breakdown!

USARS Flat Track

Key Rules & Strategies

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Domination at the Front of the Pack

In USARS, if all Blockers on a team can pass all opposing Blockers, **the team at the front becomes the defined Pack**, even if it is the minority player group. The front has total pack speed control; if the rear team plays passively, it will fall out of play and become easy points. To avoid this hopeless position, **teams must keep an opposing Blocker trapped behind them at all times**—even if that allows an opposing Jammer or Pivot to escape. This sounds bad, but losing Pack control is a much bigger problem. A fast Pack makes defensive containment easier, but scoring harder. If a team wants big points, stopping one opponent isn't enough: It must slow down everyone. Fight like hell for forward position!

The Pivot Break



USARS Pivots are eligible to directly score points in every jam. No Star Pass needed! After a Jammer gets Lead status, the other team can send their Pivot out (or their Jammer, but not both) to try and score. This makes Initial Passes very challenging, as teams must constantly defend multiple opponents. Offense is also more difficult, since a Pivot can chase the Lead Jammer to limit scoring to single passes. However, Pivots using that strategy won't score very often. A good Pivot will **guard the front of the Pack to stop the opposing Pivot and Jammer from escaping** so her team has time to get Lead and score unopposed. That's hard to do, but scoring a lot of points in a Jam shouldn't be easy!

Yield Position to Undo Track Cuts

In USARS, **if a player Cuts the Track, it is not a penalty**. Referees will verbally warn or whistle at the player to exit the Track & recycle to the rear of the Pack, where they can legally rejoin play. **Yielding any advantage gained after a cut means there is no overall impact on game-play**—so no penalty. It's hard enough to gain forward position in the Pack; losing it all on a cut is not worth it!



[Click here](#) to learn more about the **Pivot Break** in our video breakdown!

RDCL Banked Track & USARS Flat Track

Common Rules & Strategies

Stopping & Clockwise Skating: It's Illegal!

In the RDCL & USARS, **players must skate in the counter-clockwise direction at all times.**

Stopping or moving clockwise on the Track is a penalty (with a few exceptions when out of bounds or out of play). This is partly for safety, to help avoid dangerous wrong-way collisions at speed. It also **gives teams more freedom & more options to maneuver offensively**, letting players get in position to assist their teammates more often. A Jammer hit out of bounds can still be recycled to the rear, but a team must skate forward past the Jammer—and any opposing Blockers—to keep her there!



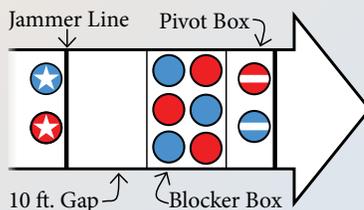
Dynamic Lead Status



In the RDCL & USARS, **the first Jammer to complete the Initial Pass must always become the Lead Jammer.** However, if the opposing Jammer (or USARS Pivot) exits the Pack, catches up to, and passes the Lead skater, **Lead status switches to the other team.** This can happen any time after the Initial Pass (as long as the players involved are on the same lap) and sometimes several times during a Jam. In a race between two teams, the fight for Lead status never ends. Whoever can take the race lead has the advantage of calling off the Jam!

The Fair and Equal Jam Start

The RDCL & USARS **mandate pre-Jam player start position.** (See diagram.) This gives everyone **equal opportunity to the same offensive & defensive strategies.** If a team wants a strong defensive 4-wall, the other team is guaranteed a chance to prevent it with offensive blocking. If both want the same thing, whoever gets it will have earned it fair & square!



[Click here to learn more about Jam Starts through roller derby history](#)

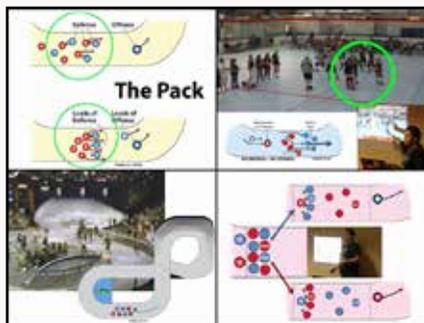
Lead Jammer Call-Off Restrictions

In the RDCL & USARS, **the Lead Jammer must be in-bounds to call off the Jam.** USARS takes the restriction even further, requiring a Lead Scorer (Jammer or Pivot) also be upright and pass an opponent before the hip-tap will be acknowledged. This forces the Lead skater to be in control of herself to have the right to be in control of the Jam. It also gives the other team an offensive chance on a Jam if they make a good defensive play. **Blockers must offensively support their Jammer on a scoring pass to keep them in-bounds** and protect their team's Jam call-off privilege. If they don't, the other team can steal Lead status and score some points!

Want to Learn More about More Roller Derby?

Watch the Another Derby Seminar

80 years of roller derby history in 80 minutes! Our RollerCon 2013 seminar takes a fun and insightful look at historic & modern derby variants, then explains the links between them with videos & diagrams. [Click to watch now!](#)



Read the Points Per Jam Analysis

	WFTDA 2014	RDCL 2014	MADE 2014	USARS 2014
Minimum Defense Required for Uncontacted Scoring Chances in Regular Play	4 vs 1	4 vs 2	4 vs 2	4 vs 3
Minimum Defense Needed for Big Scoring Chance	4 vs 1	4 vs 2	4 vs 2	4 vs 3
Required Players	Jammer	Jammer + Blocker	Jammer + Blocker	Jammer + Pivot

Learn the differences in scoring difficulty in four modern roller derby gameplay environments, and how it can affect everything from game competition to fan attendance. [Click to read now!](#) (Derby super-nerds only!!)

Also check out the **Roller Derby Rules Center** for quick links to every major derby rule book, rules resources, and analysis on rule updates!



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