

## Seaside Siren Roller Girls - the first and only roller derby team in south Essex!

### What is Roller Derby?

Roller Derby is an American-invented, predominately female, full-contact roller sport. Roller derby is played on quad skates, not rollerblades! As well as quads, players wear padded protection to minimise the impact of bumps and falls. Helmets, mouthguards, wristguards elbow pads and knee pads are mandatory.

All players must pass a minimum skills assessment (governed by the Women's Flat Track Derby Association – WFTDA) before they are allowed to take part in a game.

### Game play

A whole game of roller derby is known as a *bout*. A bout is made up of several two-minute sessions, each called a *jam*. It's played on an oval track and there are five players on each team. The object of the game is for certain players – called *jammers* – to lap members of the opposing team – known as *blockers* – to score points.

One blocker from each team is a *pivot* and it is they who are out front and determine the pace of the pack.

For the duration of the jam, blockers try to stop the opposing team's jammer from getting through the pack, using legal blocking zones on the body (elbows are definitely not allowed), but at the same time trying to help their own jammer get through the pack. Therefore players need to be very tactically skilled as well as technically skilled.



### I saw the movie Whip It and they play Roller Derby on a banked track – why don't UK leagues play on a banked track?

Whilst there are a handful of leagues in the US who play on banked tracks, the majority of the US leagues, and definitely all UK leagues, play on a flat track.

Despite the professionalism, dedication and athleticism of the women who play this sport, roller derby is still classed as an amateur sport. Therefore 99.9% of leagues are run by the skaters themselves (in addition to their day jobs and family lives!) on a not-for-profit basis. This means that the vast majority of leagues couldn't afford a banked track even if they wanted one.

However it doesn't just come down to cost. The main reason the majority of leagues skate on a flat track is historic, and most leagues are dedicated to skating flat track roller derby. The advantage of flat track roller derby is that anyone can start a roller derby team anywhere, and so continues the grass roots mentality of the sport.

For more information on why the banked/flat track split occurred, check out the book '**Rollergirl: Totally true tales from the track**' by Melissa 'Melicious' Joulwan; or watch the fantastic documentary '**Hell on Wheels**' directed by Bob Ray available from Indiepix Films: <http://www.indiepixfilms.com/film/hellonwheels>

### Who are Seaside Siren Roller Girls?

Seaside Siren Roller Girls (SSRG) are based in Southend on Sea and are the first and only roller derby team in south Essex. SSRG was founded in 2009 by former members of another team who saw that there was nothing like it in the area.

SSRG was formed to make roller derby more accessible to people, and especially women, in south Essex.

SSRG members come from all walks of life; they're professionals, mothers, students and wives from all ethnicities and backgrounds.

Members practise together as a league every Sunday, and those who have passed their minimum skills assessment also practise together midweek.

In addition, all permanent league members are committed to practising in their own time in between practices.

Although not currently a member of WFTDA, part of the SSRG 5 year plan is to become an apprentice league and subsequently a full member of WFTDA.

SSRG is fully administered and run by league members and is funded entirely by membership subscriptions and donations from kind and valued supporters.

SSRG fully embraces and acts out the 'for the skaters, by the skaters' ethos that makes roller derby so great.



Seaside Siren Roller Girls - Practise - 21 Feb 2010



### Even more information

For a far more eloquent, more comprehensive explanation of Flat Track Roller Derby, the rules of the game and the minimum skills requirements mentioned above please check out [www.wftda.com](http://www.wftda.com), the Women's Flat Track Derby Association.

### Contact details:

If you would like to contact SSRG for more information or to arrange an interview or come and watch a practice please contact [press@seasidesirenrollergirls.com](mailto:press@seasidesirenrollergirls.com) or check out our website <http://www.seasidesirenrollergirls.com>

**Thank you for taking the time to find out about SSRG, we look forward to hearing from you!**