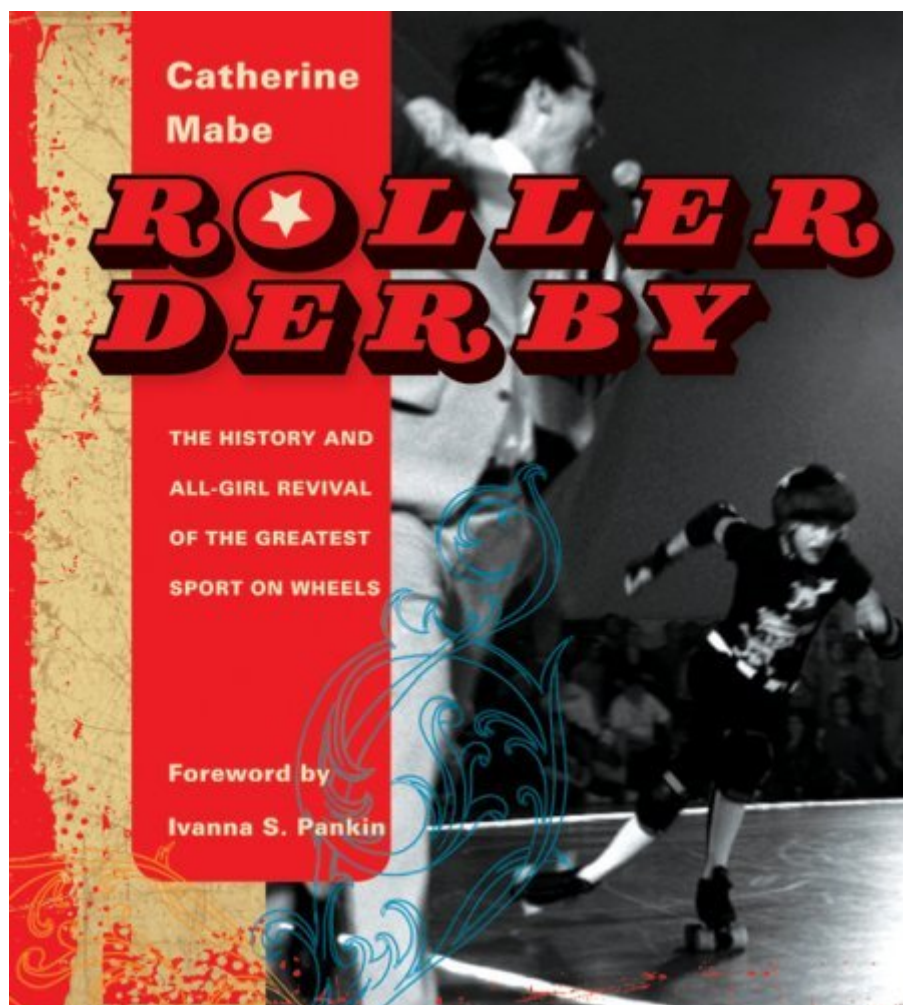


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# Roller Derby: The History And All-Girl Revival Of The Greatest Sport On Wheels



## Synopsis

Scores of American women are leading double lives. By day they are librarians, financial analysts, bartenders, teachers, and even mothers; by night their athletic alter egos assume their authority with monikers such as Helen Wheels, Dirty Britches, Anna Mosity, and Assaultin' Pepa. They lace up their skates, slide into racy racing uniforms, and adorn a full set of protective gear. One of America's greatest sports is back-roller derby. In *Roller Derby*, readers will encounter roller derby in its various incarnations, from the original Depression-era games through the days of Roller Jam to its current revival. What started as a dance-a-thon-style test of endurance has evolved into a unique sport that exemplifies point-scoring, body-checking, speed, blood, punches, and miles and miles of personality and style. Punctuated throughout the book are derby vignettes: stories from old-school and new-school girls, the process of selecting a derby name and style, the artistic element to logos and uniforms, so-gruesome-you-just-have-to-look injuries, what's legal during a bout and more importantly-what's not, and much more. Encircling the story of roller derby are vintage promo paraphernalia and historical photographs, as well as stunning, full-color and black-and-white, modern-day shots of the women, the bouts, and the sport.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I am a roller derby referee, "Willy Callit," having gotten my start with the Lonestar Rollergirls of Texas, the league that began the modern roller derby revival. I am currently an independent roller derby referee in the Pacific Northwest. Ms. Mabe and Speck press have produced a beautifully photographed and well researched book on the origins of derby through the modern (mostly) flat track revival. This book is the one a skater should hand her family when asked, "Roller derby? Why on earth do you want to do that?" That said, it's essentially a coffee table book, scaled down. Those actually involved in the sport will be disappointed in its relatively simplistic treatment of material. A particular peeve of mine is that many of the skaters in the photos, many of whom are personal friends, are not adequately identified in either the text or captions. Although not really relevant to a book of this scope I'm disappointed that the skaters did not get more recognition beyond "Strong Rollergirl." But of course, this is clearly not what the book is trying to be. This book is for the individual who attends one or two bouts, or has friends who attend on a casual basis, and wants to know more. It's for those who have vague recollection of sitting in front of the Philco black and white set on weekends watching the mixed-gender old schoolers tear it up and want to find out what happened to the sport in the intervening forty years or so. It's for those otherwise unfamiliar who want to get a feel for what the sport of Derby is about, as well as a little bit of eye candy along the way. As such, it works well and I consider it an excellent addition to my collection. But I will not likely be re-reading it, more likely I will be loaning it to those benighted individuals among my cronies and co-workers who simply don't get what all of the derby fuss is about. For that purpose, I'd rate it top notch.

I absolutely love this book! I have been playing roller derby for almost 3 years and never have I found something that so completely and beautifully illustrates what this sport is to me and what I love about it-- I feel like I need to keep it with me at all times so I can show it to strangers who ask me about derby. The book explains it so much better than I can. The pictures are gorgeous, and obviously shot and selected by people who know and love derby. Granted, it is a coffee table book, but for someone who wants to know what roller derby is but doesn't have the time to commit to a novel and just wants to get the basic gist and leaf through pages and pages of photographic eye candy, this book is perfect. This book is a must-have for any derby girl or derby fan, or family member or friend who wants to know what all the fuss is about. Catherine Mabe knows derby, knows the derby community, and in general just knows what she's talking about. Her book is lovely. Buy it!

There's no sources referenced in the book. The parts on the classic roller derby (common noun, as

it touches on a number of flavors) gets things horribly wrong. My best guess is that Mabe sourced those parts of the book from the sketchy histories of the sport found on various leagues' web sites. And not from the three-plus well-written books on the history of the sport. One of which is currently back in print, and another which I found available at the local public library. Let's see, contrary to what she says the Transcontinental Roller Derby started off skating on a banked track, not a flat track. RollerJam did not have an alligator pit, that was Rollergames. When an author isn't sure of the answers, the best place to find them isn't Google. It's through research. Read *Five Strides on the Banked Track, Roller Derby to RollerJam* or *A Very Simple Sport*.

bad news first: as a skater i'd have to say that i appreciated the book by melicious a bit more, it was a bit more inspiring and informational for a roller girl active in the sport. as willy callit sez, the captions could've been a bit more descriptive, but as that wasn't what the book was about that's more of a personal preference and not really a flaw. again, another personal preference would've been to see more national representation of current leagues, this one seems REALLY centered in the western conference. if you're an eastern girl and are looking for familiar faces, you probably won't see any unless you travel around a lot. BUT this book has really great photography, i mean it's really, really nice. it's supported by thorough research and is a quality read. i definitely enjoyed it and am glad i bought it. if you want to know more about the origins of derby yesterday and today, and get up to date on how the game is played, you really need to read this one. recommended, for sure!

Mabe's book makes for an excellent textbook on roller derby. other reviews have labeled it as a good coffee table book, and i agree. i borrowed this, too, from my girlfriend (the other was melicious's) and liked all the additivies in it. however, it, again, is more like a textbook than anything else and could have easily been called "roller derby 101," instead. other reviews mentioned the lack of detail in the pictures. this i agree with. i dont really know anything about roller derby (well, until after i read this informative book) and would have liked some descriptions in the photos. that was probably the only disappointment in an other wise splendid textbook about how roller derby works.

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