



## ROLLER DERBY DEMOGRAPHICS:

### Results from the Third Annual Comprehensive Data Collection on Skaters and Fans

Women's Flat Track Derby Association  
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#### Methodology

Data for this survey were collected online during the month of February 2012. Participants (roller derby fans, skaters, and volunteers/affiliates) accessed the survey via links provided by the WFTDA and its affiliate leagues' websites, social media (Facebook, Twitter), email lists, and message boards.

The 2012 survey data set consisted of 8,346 total responses, roughly 35% from fans and the remainder from sport participants, including current skaters (female and male), retired skaters, junior skaters, league volunteers, and league business partners. For comparison, the 2011 survey data consisted of 10,403 respondents, split roughly in half between fans and participants.

Survey responses came in from fans around with world, with Americans comprising 80% of the results. For comparison, in the 2011 survey, Americans made up 91% of the results, reflecting continued growth in the sport's international popularity. The overseas responses largely originated from Canada (8%), the United Kingdom (6%), Australia (3%), and New Zealand (1%).

#### Fans

##### Basic Demographics

Overall, more roller derby fans are female (61% to 39% male). Fans 24 years old and younger are more likely to be female (85% versus 15% male). As the ages of fans increase, the gender split decreases; for all fans at 35 years old and over, the female/male split narrows to 52%/48%.

Avid fans (defined as those who have attended three or more bouts in the past year) exhibit a roughly consistent split between genders (57% female, 43% male).

Ten percent of fans are 24 years old or younger. The 25-34-year-old demographic comprises 38% of fans, while 35-54-year-olds make up another 45%. Only 8% are 55 or older. The average age among all fans is 37.0.

Four out of five (82%) fans identify as straight; the remaining identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual or other. Thirty-two percent of fans are single and 43% are married. Sixteen percent live with a partner and 9% are divorced or separated. Less than 1% are widowed.

Roughly a quarter of fans (27%) live with children under 18 in their household.

Eighty-four percent of fans have at least some college education; 63% have earned a degree. Thirty-one percent have attended graduate school and 22% have a graduate degree. Six percent have a vocational certificate or degree.

The 2012 survey also included questions for fans and skaters about their professions. Thirty-six percent are salaried professionals, 13% are employed at a managerial level, and 6% own their own business. The most popular field among fans is education (9%), followed by health care (8%) and computer systems and projects (7%). Students comprise 6% of the fan base, and only 2% reported as unemployed.

### Attracting Fans

Roller Derby is still very much a grassroots sport in terms of attracting new fans. Word of mouth is responsible for attracting the most fans, either by having a friend or family member involved (38%) or hearing about it through a friend (14%). Print advertisements bring in 11% of fans, and radio or TV advertisements are responsible for approximately 2%. Only 1% of fans report hearing about roller derby through national or local press coverage. Mainstream media and pop culture attention through feature films and documentaries such as “Whip It!” and “Hell on Wheels” and/or the A&E show “Rollergirls” was responsible for 14% of fans hearing about roller derby.

### Sponsor Interest

Roller Derby fans have spending power. A third (33%) of fans have a household income of at least \$75,000 per year. Ninety-eight percent of all fans agree that roller derby bouts provide good entertainment value for their money. Businesses would be smart to get the attention of roller derby fans by sponsoring a league. Eighty-two percent of all fans know the businesses that support their local roller derby league, and 95% hold a favorable opinion of these businesses. Seventy-five percent have patronized businesses that sponsor their local league.

### Sports Interest

Fifty-three percent of fans reported attending two or more sporting events other than roller derby in 2011. Conversely, this means that the other 47 percent of fans are a relatively untapped audience in terms of sports event marketing—fans marketers might otherwise find challenging to reach. Forty-one percent of the responding fans do not consider themselves fans of ‘traditional’ major U.S. sports (baseball, football, hockey, basketball, soccer).

Roller Derby fans keep up with sports through several outlets. Within the last year, 76% have watched sports or sports-related programming on TV. Seventy-four percent keep up with sports by visiting websites, and nearly half (49%) listen to sports-related programming on the radio or on line. Forty-one percent accessed sports scores or information on their cell phones, and a quarter (25%) received sports updates via SMS texts or Twitter.

Forty-seven percent indicated a willingness to pay for streamed live roller derby video of their favorite league’s action, and 50% indicated a willingness to pay a further premium for higher quality video stream access.

## **Skaters**

### Basic Demographics

Even with the continued emergence of male roller derby leagues, women make up 94% of active adult roller derby skaters (down from 98% in 2010 and 95% in 2011). However, men make up 56% of league volunteers, including referees.

The majority (59%) of female skaters are between the ages of 25 and 34. Twenty-seven percent of skaters are older than 35, and 13% are 24 or younger. The average age among female skaters is 31.2 years.

Seventy-five percent of adult female skaters identify as straight; the remaining 25% identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, or other. These figures are virtually unchanged from the 2010 and 2011 surveys.

One-third (31%) of skaters are single, slightly more (37%) are married, and a quarter (25%), live with a partner. Six percent are divorced or separated. Thirty percent of skaters live with children under 18 in their household. Eighty-four percent of skaters have at least some college education and 65% have earned a college degree. Thirty-two percent have some graduate education, and 24% have a graduate level degree. Nine percent have earned a vocational certificate or degree.

Many female roller derby skaters pursue achievement both on the track as amateur athletes and off the track in the workplace. Thirty-five percent of the active female skaters are salaried professionals, 15% are employed at a managerial level, and 5% own their own business. The most popular careers among current active skaters include education (11%), health care (practitioners, technical, and support) (11%), and office and administration support (6%). Four percent of skaters report careers in accounting and financial operations, arts and design, food service, retail sales, and homemaking. Six percent are full-time students, and 1% report as unemployed.

Twenty-six percent report 2011 income exceeding \$75,000 USD, and 45% exceed \$50,000.

#### Attracting New Skaters

Over half (57%) of the female skaters first heard of the modern roller derby revival through a friend or someone they knew who was involved. Ten percent saw a print advertisement. Four percent of current skaters saw links or stories on the internet, and 10% met skaters at an event. As with fans, grassroots methods currently shoulder the most responsibility for spreading the word about roller derby to potential skaters.

#### Financial Commitment

Current female skaters averaged spending \$622 (USD) on skating equipment and gear in 2011, along with \$656 (USD) in travel for roller derby and an additional \$223 in other support costs (dues, tickets for events, etc.).

Sixty-six percent of the active female skaters indicated a willingness to pay for streamed live roller derby video of their favorite league's action, and 71% indicated a willingness to pay a further premium for higher quality video stream access.

#### **Opinions about the sport – Skaters and Fans**

Sixty percent of skaters agree that it's important to them that a bout they are considering seeing is a WFTDA bout. Even if it is not a formally sanctioned event, 93% say that it's important to them that roller derby bouts are played under a nationally agreed upon set of rules such as the WFTDA rules set.

Current female skaters show a greater support for men's roller derby than those not involved in the sport. Support for men's derby is equal to or greater than support for women's derby among thirty-two percent of the active female skaters, representing a 4% increase from 2011. This rate is significantly higher than the 15% of responding fans who express equal or greater support for men's roller derby (itself a two percent increase from 2011).

Eleven percent of the active female skaters, 17% of active male skaters, and 7% of the fans agree that they would enjoy roller derby more if skaters skated under their real names.

As the sport of roller derby continues to evolve, fans, volunteers, and skaters alike were polled on their feelings about several aspects of the rules of the game. The percentages below sum those answering either “Agree” or “Strongly Agree” with changes they would like to see in the rules of the WFTDA game:

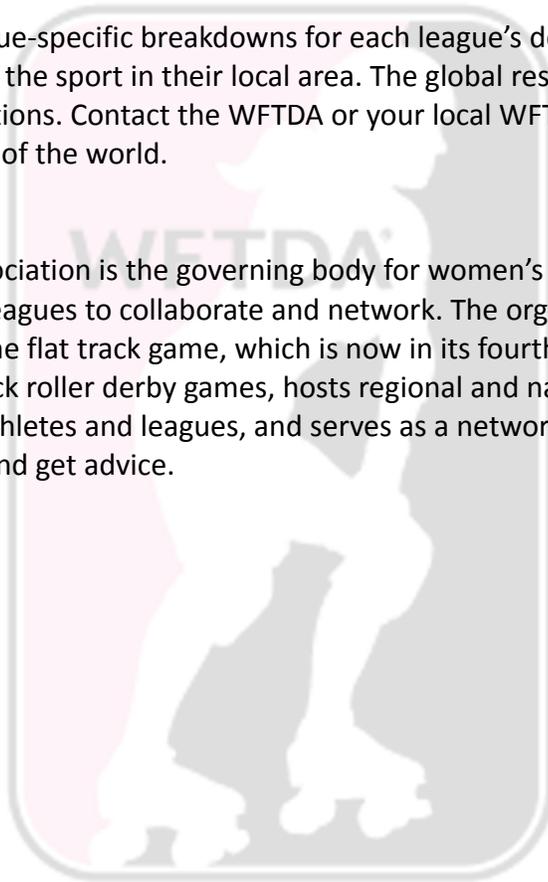
“I would like to see...” ‘Agree’ or ‘Strong Agree’:	Skaters female / male, all ages (3543 responses)	Active volunteers including officials (1316 responses)	Fans (2560 responses)
... elimination of minor penalties	44%	47%	31%
... skater formations at starts of jams	52%	61%	30%
... timing of the starts of jams	47%	53%	23%
... changes to legality of clockwise skating	28%	37%	18%
... changes to encourage closer bout outcomes	37%	43%	33%

### More Information Available

The 2012 survey also contains league-specific breakdowns for each league’s demographics, as well as fan opinions about the presentation of the sport in their local area. The global results are generally reflected in local markets, but with local exceptions. Contact the WFTDA or your local WFTDA league for more detail about the fans and skaters in your corner of the world.

### About the WFTDA

The Women’s Flat Track Derby Association is the governing body for women’s flat track roller derby, and a membership organization for the leagues to collaborate and network. The organization created and maintained the first standardized rule set for the flat track game, which is now in its fourth edition. The WFTDA also serves as the sanctioning body for flat track roller derby games, hosts regional and national tournaments, sets safety standards, provides insurance to athletes and leagues, and serves as a networking venue for flat track roller derby leagues to share resources and get advice.



## ADDENDUM - SUMMARY RESULTS

### February 2012 WFTDA Demographic Survey

Total sample size: 8,346. Participant volunteers took a 33-question internet-based survey.

3,717 current female adult roller derby competitors surveyed

2,857 roller derby fans surveyed

1,050 league volunteers surveyed

722 former skaters, male skaters, young adult skaters, retired skaters, and other sport partners surveyed

80% surveyed are American fans/skaters (2011: 88%. 2010: 89%)

20% surveyed are international fans/skaters (2011: 12%. 2010: 11%)

**Fan Gender:** 61% female, 39% male (2011: 66% female, 34% male. 2010: 59% female, 41% male)

#### Fan Age:

< 25 yrs: 10% (2011: 11%. 2010: 10%)

25-34 yrs: 38% (2011: 42%. 2010: 41%)

35-44 yrs: 31% (2011: 30%. 2010: 30%)

45-54 yrs: 14% (2011: 11%. 2010: 11%)

55+ yrs: 8% (2011: 6%. 2010: 7%)

#### Skater Age:

< 25 yrs: 13% (2011: 13%. 2010: 15%)

25-34 yrs: 59% (2011: 60%. 2010: 63%)

35-44 yrs: 25% (2011: 23%. 2010: 22%)

45-54 yrs: 2% (2011: 2%. 2010: 2%)

55+ yrs: < 0% (2011: 0%. 2010: < 0%)

#### Fan Education Level Achieved:

Some high school: 1% (2011: 1%. 2010: 1%)

High school diploma: 8% (2011: 7%. 2010: 9%)

Vocational degree: 6% (2011: 6%. 2010: n/a)

Some undergraduate: 21% (2011: 23%. 2010: 27%)

Undergraduate diploma: 32% (2011: 33%. 2010: 34%)

Some graduate level: 9% (2011: 9%. 2010: 9%)

Graduate degree: 22% (2011: 20%. 2010: 21%)

#### Skater Education Level Achieved:

Some high school: < 0% (2011: < 0%. 2010: 1%)

High school diploma: 6% (2011: 7%. 2010: 8%)

Vocational degree: 9% (2011: 7%. 2010: n/a)

Some undergraduate: 19% (2011: 22%. 2010: 25%)

Undergraduate diploma: 33% (2011: 34%. 2010: 37%)

Some graduate level: 8% (2011: 10%. 2010: 10%)

Graduate degree: 24% (2011: 20%. 2010: 19%)

#### Fan Marital Status

Single: 32% (2011: 34%. 2010: 37%)

Married: 43% (2011: 38%. 2010: 37%)

Living With Partner: 16% (2011: 18%. 2010: 16%)

Divorced/Separated: 9% (2011: 9%. 2010: 8%)

#### Skater Marital Status

Single: 31% (2011: 32%. 2010: 33%)

Married: 37% (2011: 37%. 2010: 36%)

Living With Partner: 25% (2011: 25%. 2010: 24%)

Divorced/Separated: 6% (2011: 7%. 2010: 7%)

**Fans living with children 18 or younger:** 27% (2011: 27%. 2010: 24%)

**Skaters living with children 18 or younger:** 30% (2011: 31%. 2010: 31%)

**Fan Sexual Orientation:** 82% straight, 18% gay / lesbian / bisexual / other (2011: 80/19%. 2010: 82/18%)

**Skater Sexual Orientation:** 75% straight, 25% gay / lesbian / bisexual / other (2011: 76/23%. 2010: 76/24%)

#### Fan household income before taxes:

Less than \$15,000: 8% (2011: 8%. 2010: 8%)

\$15K up to \$25K: 8% (2011: 9%. 2010: 9%)

\$25K up to \$35K: 11% (2011: 12%. 2010: 12%)

\$35K up to \$50K: 17% (2011: 19%. 2010: 18%)

\$50K up to \$75K: 22% (2011: 21%. 2010: 21%)

\$75K up to \$100K: 17% (2011: 15%. 2010: 15%)

\$100K up to \$150K: 11% (2011: 11%. 2010: 11%)

Over \$150,000: 5% (2011: 5%. 2010: 5%)

#### Skater household income before taxes:

Less than \$15K: 10% (2011: 9%. 2010: 7%)

\$15K up to \$25K: 12% (2011: 12%. 2010: 13%)

\$25K up to \$35K: 14% (2011: 14%. 2010: 15%)

\$35K up to \$50K: 19% (2011: 21%. 2010: 21%)

\$50K up to \$75K: 19% (2011: 20%. 2010: 20%)

\$75K up to \$100K: 14% (2011: 12%. 2010: 13%)

\$100K up to \$150K: 8% (2011: 8%. 2010: 9%)

Over \$150,000: 4% (2011: 4%. 2010: 3%)