



Electric City Roller

Grrrlz



The Electric City Roller Grrrlz practice at Wheels of Thunder on April 25. (Top) Members of the team watch others practice from the center of the track. (Left) Four team members have a small scrimmage. (Right) Mischief Merlot warms up before practice begins. *photos by Beth Britton and Grace Carr.*

Guide to the game

What are the positions?

There are up to five players per jam. One pivot, three blockers, and one jammer. The pivot wears a stripe on her helmet and is the leader of her teammates. Beginning at the first starting line, she is the last line of defense to stop the opposing jammer from escaping the pack. The blockers do not wear anything on their helmets. They play both defense and offense at any given time. The jammer wears a star on her helmet. Her goal is to pass the opposing blockers and emerge from the pack as quickly as possible.

How do teams score points?

The jammer scores points for the team. After making it through the pack of blockers once, the jammer begins scoring points for each opposing blocker she passes legally and in bounds. She can also score points on opponents who are in the penalty box and can get a fifth point if she laps the opposing jammer. Blockers are trying to stop the opposing teams jammer while helping their own jammer get through.

What are penalties?

Some penalties include throwing elbows, pushing or tripping an opposing skater, and "clothes-lining" opponents by linking arms. Penalties earn you one minute in the penalty box.

Watch them compete:

Electric City Roller GRRRLZ

May 19
6 p.m.
Four Seasons Arena

Co-ed Junior Roller Derby

June 30
Wheels of Thunder

Join the team:

Electric City Roller GRRRLZ

New skaters always welcome!
Tuesday: 6:30-9 p.m.
Sunday: 10 a.m. -12:30 p.m.

Co-ed Junior Roller Derby

New skater always welcome!
Tuesday: 4-6 p.m.
Saturday: 11 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Meet the Electric City Roller Derby team participants, volunteers

by Grace Carr, staff writer

By day, these women are known throughout the community as moms, wives, teachers, coaches, entrepreneurs, and therapists. By night, they become Mischief Merlot, Fr8 Train Fred, Krash Karlson, and Court'r Pound-Her.

These are the women on the Electric City Roller Derby team -- the Electric City Roller GRRRLZ.

The Great Falls team was founded by "Back Alley Bejay" and "Mischief Merlot" more than eight years ago.

One of the team's newest members since January is Katie.

"It's something I kind of always wanted to do," she said. "I'm a bored housewife, and I need to get out my aggression."

She says the hardest part about playing the game is not being too hard on yourself when you fall, because it will happen a lot when you first start playing.

Bejay, better known as Back Alley, has been skating for eight and a half years. She is the cofounder of the team.

"It's fun," she said. "I wouldn't trade it for the world. It's pure addiction at this point."

The hardest part of the game to her is getting older and staying on top of her game as the years go on.

Janine Hieb is the founder of the Junior Roller Derby team. She also refs for adults and coaches the kids.

"I started in adult roller derby at 50 years-old," she said.

The Great Falls Junior Roller Derby team is the only co-ed team in Montana. It has been open to kids ages 7-17 for the past four years. They have traveled to Canada, Washington, and Montana.

Lester Ortiz is a sophomore at Charles M. Russell High School and a member of the junior roller derby team. He has been playing for three years.

"I just enjoy skating," Ortiz said, adding that he would encourage anyone to join the team.

"It's a really friendly environment, and you feel like you belong," he said.

Being a part of the team requires a dedication to volunteering and community service.

"We love to be involved in our community," Hieb said.

Her goal is to teach the importance of being involved in the community and prove to younger generations that there is always something to do.

High school students are commonly heard saying "there is nothing to do in this town." Hieb hopes she can show all the volunteer opportunities Great Falls has to offer.

So far, the junior team has raised \$10,291 for St. Jude's Children's Hospital and heavily participates in helping the Scottish Rite program in Great Falls.

Fundraising is also important to the team. The players bag groceries, host bake sales and spaghetti dinners, and hold raffle sales at the rink.

These roller derby participants bring a new meaning to the phrase "work hard, play hard."



Back Alley Bejay and her teammates scrimmage during practice on April 25 at Wheels of Thunder Roller Derby Rink. *photo by Grace Carr.*