



WFTDA Roller Derby Announcer Guide

By the WFTDA Announcing Development Committee

Hello and Welcome!

This guide is designed to help you keep elevating and stay motivated, no matter where you are in your announcing journey. If you've never been on a microphone, if you've done some announcing, or if you're a longtime veteran, we're here for you every step of the way.

Get out there and have fun announcing!

Your WFTDA Announcing Development Committee

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Beginner Announcers Quick Reference

This page can be printed separately as a cheat sheet or kept with your notes during a game.

Avoid pronoun mistakes!

- The safest way is to not use pronouns. You could use:
 - Derby name.
 - Team color or name + # (Examples: Blue 65, Globo Gym 123).
 - Team color or name + position (Examples: Green pivot, Beach Burns blocker).
- "They / Them" is not a catch-all.
- You could use pronouns from rosters (if provided), or omit pronouns altogether.

Avoid pronunciation mistakes!

- Before the game, go to each team, read all the names from that team's roster aloud, and write down any corrections, clarifications, or substitutions.

Before a game, make sure to:

- Bring a water bottle or hydration, and any medications or essential personal items.
- Bring a pen.
- Show up with enough time to read through announcer notes and game rosters.
- If you aren't given a calltime, 30 minutes before the first whistle should be a safe estimate.
- Review all name pronunciations with each team's coach.
- Review all officials' name pronunciations with a head official.

During a game:

- You can announce:
 - Preprinted callouts from the announcer notes.
 - Team rosters and officials rosters.
 - Who's at the jammer line at the start of each jam.
 - Things you're confident about from the WFTDA gameplay rules.
 - If you're not completely sure what happened, leave it out.
- House announcing: Only comment on things that already happened (and indicated by ref hand signals or whistles, if applicable).
- Stream announcing: You can speculate or talk strategy.
- Sponsorship announcing: Coordinate with other announcers to give you enough time for callouts.
- Be impartial - give equal energy & enthusiasm to each team.
- Have fun showing your passion for moments that excite you.

If you misgender someone:

- Be respectful when corrected, and thank the person correcting you.
- Own your mistake, apologize, and move on. Do not defend your error.

If you misidentify or misname someone:

- Apologize directly, specifically, and immediately (between jams is acceptable).
- Captains may inform the Head Officials that any interactions regarding misidentification should be delivered to the Team Captain rather than an affected skater.

Your Role

What is an announcer? What does an announcer do?

Words of Wisdom: What does announcing mean to you?

"A chance to share my passion for the sport. I want to make the people feel the way I feel when I'm watching a game." - *Hémo'*

"Announcing has given me some of the best adventures of my life. I didn't expect it to take me out of my comfort zone as often as it has." - *Cakes*

The most essential thing an announcer does is keep attendees informed and engaged.

As an announcer, you shape everyone's experience of the event, and you're part of the memories they leave with.

Skating is obviously the main focus of any roller derby event. But imagine if people also show up because they want to hear you, or they feel it wouldn't be the same without you. You can have this kind of impact!

What this actually looks like depends on you, and it will be covered in more depth throughout the guide. Read on!

Your Voice, Your Style

Celebrating and elevating your individual personality in talking about roller derby.

Words of Wisdom: What's the main tip you give to new announcers?

"Find a good balance between information and passion, tell the story and give it character but remember you're the narrator and the game is the focus." - *Holly*

Although this is a guide for how to announce, it is absolutely not saying you "must" do things a certain way, and it is not trying to mold you into anyone else. One of the beautiful things about the roller derby community is the spirit of each individual. So a top priority of this guide is to help you announce through the lens of your wonderful self. The announcing community is small and widespread so we wanted to develop a resource guide to help you start or develop as the announcer you always wanted to be.

Vocal Clarity

Just as far as sound, the only thing that should be emphasized across all announcers is that the attendees clearly understand what you're saying. No matter what language it's in or where in the world the game is taking place, if your audience can't tell what you're saying, all the effort you put in goes nowhere. So clarity is highly encouraged.

Aside from clarity, you're encouraged to speak in whatever tone of voice feels natural and sustainable to you for narrating a high-action sport.

What Kind of Style Do You Want to Craft?

Think about what it means, or what you want it to mean, for people to attend a game announced by you. What kind of flavor, or energy, or insight can they expect you to bring?

Here are some style examples:

- Some announcers do jokes and humor.
- Some announcers are more technical or rules focused.
- Some announcers highlight the community and volunteer aspects of derby.
- Some announcers banter between each other.
- And a million other ways.

If the attendees are into what you're doing (and you're not being offensive or affecting the outcome of the game), there's no wrong approach. And you're always free to experiment as you go along.

Combining Different Styles and Roles

You're always free to mix and match any styles with in-house or streaming, to see what resonates with your audience. Who you are talking to will determine what styles work best:

- If you're doing in-house and the spectators are 95% skaters, banter is more appreciated.
- If it's lots of new spectators you'll need to do more game explaining in an in-house role.
- If you are doing a stream broadcast then you can talk about strategy and tactics as you can't influence the game and the audience will be knowledgeable.
- Stream roles will usually have sponsor reads so knowing how and when to include those is important.

Growth/Experimentation

Trying new things, different approaches, learning from others, etc.

Words of Wisdom: What does announcing do for you?

“As an introverted, anxious, and shy person, young me would never have believed that I would enjoy standing in front of a live audience purposely building energy and excitement for the spectacle.” - *Bob deQuickly*

“It gives me self confidence.” - *Es Terminate*

If you're brand new or newish to announcing, you've got a fun-filled journey ahead. But even if you've been announcing since literally the day roller derby was invented, that doesn't have to mean you're done growing. Remember—you're always free to try new things.

Top ways you can grow as an announcer:

- Attend other venues.
- Announce different kinds and levels of games.
- Co-announce with a variety of announcers.
- Look at best practices in other sports.
- Try different announcing roles that you are less experienced in.
- Keep announcing more games!

Attend Other Venues

Regardless of your level of experience, a great way to keep up with what's out there is to attend games away from your home venue. Or if you can't physically attend, search online for streamed games that include announcer audio.

There's always a chance you'll hear new ways of articulating the action or encounter different styles of insight. You might come back with things you want to try in your own announcing. If you attend physically, you can even connect with other announcers to help increase the community.

Announce Different Kinds and Levels of Games

You could also shake up the kinds of games you announce. If your most recent games were all competitive, you could sign up for a shenanigans game, or vice versa. You could mix up the levels: if lately you've only been announcing for your league's travel or all-star team, or only for the home teams, or just for the adults, or just for the juniors, etc., try something different for your next game. If available, you could also sign up for and experience the differences between regulation and sanctioned games.

All these opportunities depend on the structure of your league. But even if you can't experience these varieties at your home venue, you can still try to find such games to watch at other venues or via streaming.

Co-announce With a Variety of Announcers

If you have the opportunity, you could also co-announce with people you haven't announced with before. Similar to watching games at other venues or via streaming, putting yourself in different co-announcer pairings is a way to not just see but also interact with other announcing styles. You could also be transparent by letting the other person know beforehand if there are certain things you want to experiment with.

Look at Best Practices In Other Sports

As you develop your announcing experience you might start bringing your announcer eye to other sports. Listening to professional commentators in other sports can help you understand how they define play-by-play and colour roles, or where they use other tips, tricks, and tools.

Try Announcing Roles You're Less Experienced/Comfortable In

We all have roles where we feel we do our best work and we are more comfortable delivering—our comfort zones. Most of us started as in-house announcers, so that can feel fun and easy, or we mainly do play-by-play on stream. But we only improve the other roles by practice, so look for opportunities to polish your skills in different roles.

Keep Announcing More Games

In tandem with any of the above things that you try, keep announcing. You might even find that you evolve subconsciously, if attendees tell you that you sound different than they remember from before.

Staying Motivated

Here are some ways to continually find inspiration, no matter your level of experience.

Words of Wisdom: Burnout is real - how do you stay motivated?

"Know when to take a break, and be sure the organisation knows it's a lot of work. Eat well, hydrate, and sleep well. Party when it's over!" - *Nasty Moves*

"Not saying 'YES' to every offer of an announcing spot. Talking to people who are 'positive' for me between the games. And not taking me too serious while announcing (while still taking Announcing, Roller Derby and everyone involved VERY serious as they all dedicate their time and energy to this)." - *Baphomatt*

Think about your favorite sports events you saw in person. Not just roller derby but any sport. What made the events epic for you? Was it the people you went with? Was it the roar of the crowd? The food? The music? Aside from the gameplay itself, what are your most fond memories?

The things that excited you the most at those events are also things you can dial into when announcing derby.

Do you get fired up when crowds cheer?

- Get your crowd to cheer: it could be to acknowledge people who came from out of town; cheer for their favorite team (make sure you stay impartial); cheer for the volunteers, etc.

Do you relish watching sports with friends and family?

- Shoutout groups you see in the crowd, shoutout friends and family who came to support.
- If your venue is open to this, you could also let people request birthday or special occasion shoutouts, either for free or donation based.

Do you enjoy food while watching the action?

- If there's food, shoutout the food vendors. You could also call out some menu items to get the crowd's appetites going.

- If there's a league bakesale, shoutout the bakesale and where the proceeds will go.
- If there's a bar, shoutout the bar and any specials going on. Announce last call when it comes time.

Do you love it when there's great music?

- Bring or request a playlist for the background. Keep in mind age or lyric appropriateness for the event. And if the event requires it to be royalty-free, make sure to honor that.

Do you love gameplay, tactics, or fancy footwork?

- Call it out when you see it happen. Share your enthusiasm with the crowd so they can notice and enjoy these moments too.

The point is, when you're excited, it's easier for you to get others excited. So remembering what you love most about sports events can help you give people epic memories of the events you announce too. Bringing that excitement to the audience is crucial to a good stream broadcast, helping the audience at home feel like they are in the venue.

And you can access this at any stage of your announcing journey—none of these examples require roller derby knowledge!

Words of Wisdom: What have you learned from other sports that you bring to announcing?

"I watch a lot of Formula 1 and announcers know when to speak, when to drop info, and when to bring energy!" - *Hémo'*

"People like human moments, listen to how many times announcers in other sports gasp at a cool move or similar, that's the fun bit." - *Juke Special*

Here's another thing you can try, regardless of how long you've been announcing:

Look up clips of legendary sports events, from any sport. Moments that made history, moments that people may even still talk about to this day. Pick them apart. Figure out what made the atmosphere electric in those moments. Think about how you might contribute to such an atmosphere at your venue, through your announcing.

Gameplay Overview

Here's a baseline synopsis of the elements, objectives, and flow of a game, including a cheatsheet of penalty signals.

Summary from *The Rules of Flat Track Roller Derby*

The game of Flat Track Roller Derby is played on a flat, oval track. Play is broken up into two 30-minute periods, and within those periods, into units of play called "Jams," which last up to two minutes. There are 30 seconds between each Jam.

During a Jam, each team fields up to five Skaters. Four of these Skaters are called "Blockers" (together, the Blockers are called the "Pack"), and one is called a "Jammer." The Jammer wears a helmet cover with a star on it.

The two Jammers start each Jam behind the Pack, and score a point for every opposing Blocker they lap, each lap. Because they start behind the Pack, they must get through the Pack, then all the way around the track to be eligible to score points on opposing Blockers.

Roller derby is a full-contact sport; however, Skaters cannot use their heads, elbows, forearms, hands, knees, lower legs, or feet to make contact with opponents. Skaters cannot make contact with their opponents' heads, backs, knees, lower legs, or feet.

Play that is unsafe or illegal may result in a Skater being assessed a penalty, which is served by sitting in the Penalty Box for 30 seconds of Jam time.

The team with the most points at the end of the game wins.

A common Jam might go like this:

1. Blockers line up behind the Pivot Line and in front of the Jammer Line.
2. Jammers line up behind the Jammer Line.
3. At the Jam-Starting Whistle, the Blockers skate forward and compete for superior position. The Jammers skate forward and try to get through the Pack. Each Blocker simultaneously tries to prevent the opposing Jammer from getting past, and to help their own Jammer get through.

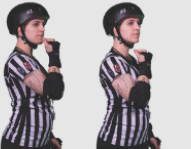
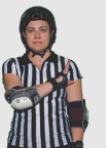
4. One Jammer exits the Pack and is declared Lead Jammer, earning the right to end the Jam when they decide. This Jammer races around the track to get into scoring position.
5. The same Jammer begins to work their way through the Pack for the second time, and the opposing Jammer makes their way out of the Pack for the first time.
6. As the second Jammer to escape the Pack comes around into scoring position, the first Jammer calls off the Jam.
7. The first Jammer has scored points (up to four), and held their opponent at zero points. Meanwhile, the opposing Jammer (by getting into scoring position) held the first Jammer at only those points, as they could have scored more points on subsequent passes.

Source: [Summary — The Rules of Flat Track Roller Derby](#)

WFTDA Officiating Cues, Codes, and Signals

You can familiarize yourself with the standardized verbal cues, hand signals, penalty codes, and whistles used by roller derby officials, so that you can tell the audience things like why a skater has been sent to the penalty box. A detailed guide can be found at [WFTDA Officiating Cues, Codes and Signals](#), but a quick reference guide to penalty hand signals is provided on the next page.

PENALTY QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE

RULES SECTION	VERBAL CUE(S)	CODE	HAND SIGNAL
4.1.1 Impact to an Illegal Target Zone	Back Block	B	
	High Block	A	
	Low Block	L	
4.1.2 Impact with an Illegal Blocking Zone	Head Block	H	
	Forearm	F	
	Leg Block	E	
4.1.3 Other Illegal Contact	Illegal Contact Including: Illegal Assist, Early Hit	C	
	Direction Including: Stop Block	D	

RULES SECTION	VERBAL CUE(S)	CODE	HAND SIGNAL
4.1.4 Multiplayer Blocks	Multiplayer	M	
4.2.1 Illegal Positioning	Illegal Position Including: Destruction, Skating Out of Bounds, Failure to Reform, Failure to Return, Failure to Yield	P	
4.2.2 Gaining Position	Cut Including: Illegal Re-Entry	X	
4.2.3 Interfering with the Flow of the Game	Interference Including: Delay of Game	N	
4.2.4 Other Illegal Procedures	Illegal Procedure Including: Star Pass Violation, Star Pass Interference	I	
4.3 Penalties for Unsportsmanlike Conduct	Misconduct Including: Insubordination	G	



Announcing Formats

Common announcing roles are in-house, stream, production, or sponsorship. Depending on the event, you may need to do one or multiple roles at the same time. Let's look at these roles, followed by some co-announcing options.

In-House Announcer

This announcer is generally trackside and calls play-by-play, color commentary, or both over a sound system. This is the most common kind of announcer. Though depending on the event and number of volunteers, in-house or streaming may take precedence as the role to fill first.

Words of Wisdom: What's the main tip you give to new in-house announcers?

"Make it fun and interactive with your audience." - *Whippin' Red Siren*

With in-house announcing, the people on the track can hear you. This creates two big elements of the role:

- Avoid offending people.
- Avoid saying things that may affect the course of the game.

We'll look at this in more depth in the "[Things to Talk About](#)" section.

Play-by-Play

Play-by-play is a narration of the action, as things are happening or have just happened. This distinction is important to avoid speculating/predicting, to avoid prescribing strategy (such as what you think a team or skater needs to do), and avoid what you say being used by people on the track toward an unfair advantage. It's more about a moment-to-moment breakdown of what you're seeing. We'll see more details on this in the "[Things to Talk About](#)" section.

Color Commentary

Color commentary refers to when you speak about things other than the literal game action. This may include banter, jokes/humor, stories, the announcers riffing off each other—pretty much any kind of dialogue as long as it's not offensive, doesn't affect outcomes of gameplay, and the listeners are into it.

Another characteristic of in-house announcing is that you can interact with the audience. Getting people to cheer for each team, cheer for visitors from other cities/states /countries, for birthdays or other special occasions, for volunteers and officials, for family and friends of skaters, or even do the wave are all fun things you can do with audiences.

Stream Announcer

Streaming setups vary depending on the host league's resources. Some are purely a camera with no announcer, some use the in-house announcer audio, and some have one or more dedicated streaming announcers.

Words of Wisdom: What's the main tip you give to new stream announcers?

"No-one in the game can hear you, you're not bound by the same rules so call out cool moves or things as they're about to happen." - *Juke Special*

"You can leave a bit of silence, it's okay to take a break to breathe" - *Hémo'*

A big difference with streaming announcing is that the people on the track can't hear you. While you should still avoid offending people, there aren't considerations about what you say possibly affecting the outcome of the game. This can give you an opportunity to talk about the game in a different way—you can talk about strategy, tactics, and discuss actions in detail. Either way, there are potentially fans of both teams watching the stream, so still be impartial and treat everyone with equal enthusiasm and respect.

Another main difference is that you don't see your audience. They may be solely watching with no form of interaction, or they may have online chat. But since they aren't sitting trackside, hyping them up can be different. You're not going to do the wave, or have people holding handmade signs. But you can still encourage people to cheer or post for their favorite teams and skaters. And through your personality, you can give them an energetic experience, just like you would if the audience were there in person.

Not everyone is watching all of the action on a stream—they might be pottering around the house, doing chores, or checking out social media on their phone. So it's important to stick to the roles above: the play-by-play announcers telling people what is happening and the color announcer explaining why it's important. Especially on a stream, you need to “stay in your lane” to avoid talking over or interrupting the other announcer and causing an audio clash. Keeping eye contact and body language with other stream announcers can help this.

More streaming tips:

- Talk about what you see on the screen, not what you can see from your vantage point. Unless the game is impacted by something off-screen that needs to be explained to the streaming audience, eg. if the game is delayed because an injured skater is being treated by the medics. Don't leave the audience at home to guess what's happening in the venue.
- Get a balance between simple observation and strategy, and work this with your partner. Your partner might describe what's happening on track, you might then explain what result it had.
 - Example stream announcing dialogue:
 - **Announcer 1:** Blue jammer 65 finds an opening through the inside of turn 1.
 - **Announcer 2:** And Blue 65 is assessed lead jammer!
 - **Announcer 1:** Green jammer 210 has received a track cut.
 - **Announcer 2:** Green 210 is headed to the penalty box for 30 seconds. Blue 65 has a power jam!
- You can pick up on penalty counts, stand out players, blocker formations, changes in pace—a variety of things to observe depending on the game. But bear in mind that people will also want to watch, so you don't have to talk all the time!
- If the stream includes chat, you could encourage viewers to shoutout their favorite teams and skaters. You could also invite them to shoutout where they're watching from, recent derby events they saw, etc.

Production Announcer

This role generally starts appearing at bigger events, especially if it's a dedicated role. This announcer typically has a tablet or other device (or pen and paper!) to track stats throughout the game.

Words of Wisdom: What's the main tip you give to new producers?

"Ask your announcers what they want from you. Is it stats? Is it sponsorship read tallies? Is it to watch out for official reviews? Ask them! If not, or if they have no preference, pick what top three things you want to offer during the call. Focus on those top three things that you can provide to your co-announcers and build up from there. You'll get better at multitasking with time so give yourself a lot of credit and grace." - *Cakes*

If you have special derby software, the things you can call out may be obviously lined up. But in general, here are some examples of what a production announcer could track and call out:

- How many times a skater has started a jam as a jammer.
- How many times a team has gotten lead jammer vs the other team.
- Jammer rematches.
- How many times a team has made star passes.
- Each team's average points per jam.
- Individual jammers' average points per jam.
- The ratio of how many times a team gets lead jammer compared to that team's average points per jam.
- The most frequent jammer or pivot from each team.
- Highest scoring jams in the game.
- The amount of lead changes in score.
- Etc., essentially any data that you think may interest the crowd.

Remember, even though some of the factual stats you call out may be numerically lopsided, you should still convey everything in a way that's impartial and respectful to everyone.

The producer role provides not just stats support for the stream announcers but can also provide advice and pointers. They are listening to the stream so can give feedback and tips as the broadcast is progressing, as well as making sure sponsor reads are covered off. It's also becoming common for producers to feed in the results of official reviews, highlight comments in stream chats, etc.

Sponsorship Announcer

If an event is big enough or has many sponsors, there may be an announcer whose dedicated role is reading sponsor/vendor blurbs provided by the host league. Even though these reads aren't part of the game action, remember sponsors help make these events possible, so it's important for the other announcers to give this person speaking time.

Here are some opportunities for sponsorship reads:

- Before a game, as attendees are showing up.
- At timeouts or official reviews.
 - Extra credit: check with the host league beforehand to see if you should remain silent during injury timeouts (so medics can listen to assess injuries) or whether it's preferred for you to do light reads or announcements (to take the audience's focus off the injured person or people). There are upsides to both approaches, and each venue, host league, and/or medical team may have a different preference, so it's useful to check ahead of time.
- At intermission.
- After a game.
- Between jams, if there are that many sponsorship reads.
 - A note from Iron Lung: RollerCon had about four pages of sponsors for every game. It was necessary to rapidfire two or three blurbs between jams to even attempt to complete the list.

If it's important that you get through certain reads, or that some are repeated a certain number of times, use a pen or other means to mark the blurbs you've already done in a game, to help you hit quota and so you know which ones are left.

Role Blending Or Overlap

When you're divided into roles, if it seems appropriate, you could discuss with your co-announcers beforehand about who's comfortable doing what. Depending on the formality of the event, you might have leeway to slightly overlap roles. This could give more overall variety, or help newer announcers find their bearings.

- Example: Pretend a game has 3 announcers: play-by-play, color commentary, and sponsorship (this is common at RollerCon). If the announcers mutually agree beforehand, the color commentary or sponsorship announcers might occasionally comment on gameplay. The play-by-play or sponsorship announcers might sometimes chime in with color commentary, etc.
- Or everyone could simply stick to the assigned roles. Just know that, depending on the event, role assignments might be more of a guideline than a hard rule. Above all, make sure each role is covered, and work together to keep the game running smoothly so everyone in attendance has a fun time!

Extra Roles

Depending on the event, sometimes announcers facilitate activities at intermission or between games. If your event does this, confirm beforehand what you need to do and gather any items needed. Here are some examples:

- Games. Hula hoop contests, cornhole, relay races, trivia, nerf archery, t-shirt toss, etc. may have you announce the game and rules, ask for participants from the audience, oversee the game itself, give out prizes, etc.
- Shoutouts or other announcements. Birthdays, league graduations, derby milestones, or other commemorations may ask you to give a readout or callout.
- Performances. Dancers, live music, comedians, sports demos, etc. may want you to announce the performers, then thank everyone afterward.

Whatever the activity is, the host league should give you a heads-up of what to expect. If the host league isn't your home league, they may prefer to borrow the microphone and carry out the activity themselves.

Co-Announcing

Here are some common ways you can co-announce. These aren't the only options; communicate with your co-announcers ahead of time, and feel free to experiment to find what makes your flow more seamless and brings more fun for your audiences.

Words of Wisdom: What's the main tip you give to new co-announcers?

"Drop your microphone down from your face between speaking, it's a nice clear visual for another announcer that they're not about to cut across you." - *Juke Special*

"Always discuss the call before you go on air. I'm talking about more than just 30 minutes before your call. Get comfortable with your co-announcers and talk about everyone's expectations." - *Cakes*

Trading Off Jams

Announcers take turns or rotate at the start of each jam. The announcer whose jam it is calls everything for that jam.

Works better for:

- Announcers not talking over each other.
- Could be an easier format if the announcers aren't familiar with each other.
- Best if doing a bilingual call with two announcers who don't share both languages.
- Extra handy if there are three or more announcers.

Trade-offs:

- May not facilitate banter as much as other formats.

Splitting Up Teams

Each announcer gets a different team and just comments on that team.

Works better for:

- Announcers not having to focus on everyone at once.

- Could create more of a flow or banter among announcers.

Trade-offs:

- Could create situations where announcers talk over each other, or don't talk as much because they're trying to avoid talking over each other.
- If the announcers have noticeably different levels of energy, it may seem to the audience that one team is being hyped or "favored" more than the other team. Especially if a more energetic announcer has a home team and a less energetic announcer has an away team. Be mindful that announcers should appear impartial.

Focusing On Topics Or Events

One announcer can just call out certain things, while the other announcer handles everything else.

Examples:

- Just calling out the game rosters.
- Just calling out who's at the jam line at the start of a jam.
- Just calling out when a jammer gets lead.
- Just calling out star passes.
- Just calling out when a jam ends.

The gist is breaking it down into narrowly focused pieces that an announcer can get a grip on individually.

Works better for:

- Can be a strong learning tool for newer announcers, to practice making certain kinds of call-outs and layer in other calls as the announcer becomes more comfortable.
- Divvying up tasks so all announcers don't have to keep tabs on everything.

Trade-offs:

- This format may become less pertinent if the announcers are more experienced.

Winging It

Literally freeform—there's no set structure. Each announcer may comment on anything at any time.

Works better for:

- Could create a more casual vibe among the announcers, especially if they have worked together before.
- Could foster more banter.

Trade-offs:

- Could be tougher to pull off if the announcers don't gel, aren't familiar with each other, or aren't experienced enough to find a flow.
- Could lead to talking over each other.

Ways To Practice

The actual games don't have to be the only times you announce. Here are things you can do before or between events to gain comfort, experiment, or just give your league a fun time.

Words of Wisdom: What have you learned from other areas of life that you bring to announcing?

"That's the secret, never stop learning from everything you do!" - *Pepper*

Each league is different, but it's common for a given league to have one event per month, which includes one or two games. Some months may have more games, or some months may have none (if there's an off-season). This is why getting creative and finding more ways to practice can help you stay sharp.

You could also offer to announce at things like:

- Scrimmages.
- Weekly team practices.
- Non-game events (such as skate-a-thons or fundraisers).
- Or pretty much anything your league is open to and if there's a sound system.

You could also practice on your own by watching games online and making calls. This has the added benefit of being able to replay parts of the video as many times as you want. So you can experiment with what you focus on, different ways to phrase things, or even try out different voices.

Words of Wisdom: How do you practice announcing?

"One way that I practiced early on was to pull up a YouTube video, mute the game, and practice announcing it. It helped me get used to just talking about what I saw. Also, flashcards are so helpful in learning hand signals and penalty codes." - *Rippi Longstocking*

How to Sign Up for Events

Before you can announce, you need to have an announcer spot locked in. Different leagues or events have different signup processes; here are ways to help you navigate the communication, so you can get on the microphone!

If the event is with your home league or a league you've volunteered for:

- Stay current on league announcements for upcoming games. These may be in the form of Slack messages, emails, social media posts, flyers, word of mouth, etc.
- If you're a regular at the venue, the league might assume you'll be announcing. Make sure to actually confirm with the game production manager in advance either way, whether you can or can't for a given event.
- If there's a signup form, make sure you fill out the correct one. There may be separate forms for skaters vs officials vs general volunteers. Announcers might be on the officials form, the general volunteer form, or none of the forms. If you don't see an announcer option anywhere, avoid using a miscellaneous part of the form to try to sign up. If you do this, your submission might not go to a relevant person and may end up ignored. Instead, find out who's in charge of announcer signups and ask how to sign up, and/or coordinate your spot directly with that person.

If the event is for an unfamiliar league:

- Your initial contact might be sending a message to the league through their website or social media, emailing the league's volunteer or general address, or expressing to a league member in person that you're interested in announcing. With any communication that's not in person, try to ask as far in advance as you can, and remember to be gracious with the turnaround time for when or if you hear back. The person responding is a volunteer (just like you are) and might not check messages every day. But if you haven't heard back in a week, or if the event date is fast approaching, feel free to politely check back in.
- Once you've established contact or volunteered with a league at least once, reconfirm their preferred way for you to sign up for future events. From there, it's just a matter of staying current on the league's schedule and announcements so you know when you can sign up.

For larger events:

- Events such as RollerCon have their own signup website as the only way to get a spot. If your event has a specific site, app, or other singular means of registration, make sure you're able to set up an account and figure out how to sign up. If you can't get it to work, reach out as soon as possible to the listed email address or point of contact.
- Many tournaments have application forms and will post them on their website and/or share on social media.
- Sign up to the [Roller Derby Announcers](#) and [Roller Derby Announcers \(Europe\)](#) Facebook groups, as well as any national or regional groups for your area.
- Prepare for applications—identify a reference who can comment on your skills as an announcer and identify your best broadcast games.
- Keep a CV listing your games, your roles, and who you have worked with. (Here's a [sample template](#) you can fill in with your own information!)

In general:

The best way to ensure your ability to sign up for future events is to show up on time and do your best to make it fun for everyone. Demonstrating your reliability goes a long way toward lining up more announcing spots!

Preparing

Here's a checklist to help you get the essentials out of the way and focus on doing your best at the event. The farther away from home you're going, the more lead time you should give yourself to go through this list.

Physical Items

- ☐ Inhaler, medication, oxygen, lip balm, etc.
- ☐ Pet supplies, kid supplies. (If you're bringing a pet or kid.)
- ☐ Water bottle.
- ☐ Phone charger and cable.
- ☐ Sunglasses, sunscreen, an extra layer of clothing. (If the event is outdoors.)
- ☐ Earplugs or noise canceling headphones.
- ☐ Lozenges or candy.
- ☐ Pens.
- ☐ Painkillers.
- ☐ Personal fan. (If the weather may be hot.)
- ☐ Alcohol wipes.
- ☐ Umbrella. (If there may be rain.)

Regardless of Where You're Going

- ☐ Did you confirm you're on the volunteer or announcing roster for the event?
- ☐ Did you confirm the day and time of the game(s) you're announcing, and if there's an earlier call time to review printouts, event briefings, do soundchecks, etc.?
- ☐ Did you plan time to get enough sleep?
- ☐ Do you need an access code, key, etc. for the venue? If so, has this been coordinated?
- ☐ Did you confirm if you need to bring your own sound equipment? (The host league should provide this.)

If You're Going to a Venue Outside Your City Or State

- ☐ Is your transportation confirmed?
- ☐ Is your vehicle fueled up or charged? (If you're using your vehicle.)
- ☐ If not, did you plan extra time beforehand to get fuel or charge on the way?
- ☐ Did you confirm the address and specific building entrance (if it's a site with multiple buildings)?
- ☐ Did you ask about the parking situation? (If you're driving.)
- ☐ Do you have a place to stay? (If it's not a same-day trip.)
- ☐ Did you tell at least one person where you're going, in case something happens?

If You're Going to a Venue In Another Country

- ☐ Is your PTO or vacation time from work confirmed? (If this applies to you.)
- ☐ Do you have your passport or other necessary identification?
- ☐ Is your identification current and not expired?
- ☐ Are your transportation and lodgings confirmed?
- ☐ If your bookings are electronic, did you check your email or app to make sure they're correct?
- ☐ If you have physical tickets, are they sitting next to your other belongings that you're bringing?
- ☐ Did you plan enough days before or after the event, for sightseeing, time with friends/family, decompressing, etc.?
- ☐ Did you tell at least one person your travel dates and locations, in case something happens?

Things to Talk About

Here are some things to talk about or not talk about while calling games. While it wouldn't be practical to try to list out literally all possible topics, this should give you a solid idea. Although these are suggestions of what to talk about, how you sound is up to your individual personality!

Words of Wisdom: What's the main tip you give to new announcers?

"Know what you're talking about. If you don't know the rules, focus on the people. If you don't know strategy, focus on immediate actions." - *Bob deQuickly*

"When in doubt, leave it out." - *Nasty Moves*

For Literally Brand New Announcers

If you're unfamiliar with roller derby rules or nervous about speaking in front of crowds, it's ok! You can focus on things that are prewritten (so you don't have to think of what to say) or things that don't require derby knowledge.

Here are some examples:

- Venue housekeeping rules are typically prewritten. Things like no smoking, restroom locations, emergency exit procedures, etc.
- Sponsor/vendor shoutouts commonly have a prewritten blurb. If you only see a business name listed but no description, feel free to chat up the business owner (if present) beforehand or pull their website up on your phone to find interesting things you could shoutout (such as where the business is located, some merch or menu items available, fun facts about the business, etc.).
- Game rosters. You don't have to know roller derby rules to introduce the teams and officials. But do clarify name pronunciation beforehand. (This goes more in depth in the "Day of the Game" section.)
- Other logistics and venue announcements, like last call for drinks, last call for food, lost and found, a car parked outside with the lights left on, etc.
- And more! Go through announcer printouts ahead of time and find things you can read. If you're paired with a more experienced announcer, ask which things you can take ownership of announcing, and discuss your comfort level beforehand.

- If in doubt, don't say anything. You don't need to fill every second of the game with speaking. Let the action speak for itself.
- Update the audience regularly on time left and score. Not everyone is watching the scoreboard—they are chatting with friends, watching the skaters, or on their phones.

I feel like I'm rambling on. How can I stop?

If you realize this in the midst of speaking, end your current sentence, then move the microphone away from your face or move away from the microphone. If you feel like you ramble in general, you've already done the most important step, which is being aware of it.

Here are things you can try to become more deliberate with what you say, and more conscious of finding an endpoint when you speak:

- Take a breath to organize your thoughts before you speak, including the main point of what you want to say and a conclusion (ie. how you will stop speaking).
- If you see a next phase of gameplay about to happen (eg: a jam is going to start, intermission is ending, a timeout or official review is ending, etc.), try to wrap up what you're saying before the next phase starts.
- Watch more roller derby. Listen for examples where announcers balance speaking vs not speaking. See if you can pick up on announcers' timing for when they start and stop speaking.
- Announce more. Stay mindful of your habits and how you want to grow as an announcer. Keep practicing and you can improve!

I feel like I have nothing to say or that I'm just repeating myself when I speak. What can I do?

Less can be more! If you believe you don't have anything insightful or engaging to say at a particular moment, you don't have to say anything. It's ok to let the action speak for itself sometimes—you're not required to talk every second of the game.

It's also possible that you're in your head and you just think you don't have anything worth saying, when you actually do.

- Example: If you say things off-microphone to your fellow announcers or others nearby, and people often remark that you should say it on the microphone, that's a hint that you do have good things to say. From here, it's a matter of conquering self-doubt. Speak what's on your mind—you can do this!
- If the reaction in your mind is your genuine excitement about the game, someone in the crowd probably has the same reaction. As long as it's positive, non-offensive, unbiased, and doesn't affect gameplay, go for it. Say it! Imagine if attendees thought, "you read my mind!" or "I was just thinking the same thing!" in response to what you say. You could have this effect on people.

Ideally, you're paired with an experienced announcer who can help cover the other areas. Have an ongoing dialogue about things you can take ownership of announcing, and go at your own pace. What matters most is creating a fun event for everyone.

But if you're solo, thank you for bravely stepping up to announce! Your attitude to just go for it is a blessing to your league and the roller derby community. Focus on calls and reads that you're comfortable with—it's more important that the things you say are accurate, rather than overextending yourself and making yourself prone to errors. But when you do make a mistake, correct yourself as soon as you can. Your league understands that you're learning. And someday, you'll be able to look back and see how much you've grown as an announcer.

For Announcers with Some Experience

Depending on your comfort level, you could try the "focusing on topics or events" format (described in depth in the "[Announcing Formats](#)" section), to gain familiarity with various kinds of calls. As you get accustomed to the overall kinds of calls, feel free to try any of the other formats too. Try developing some standard ways for you to describe action so you have to put less mental effort into calling the game. Start developing your announcer identity: catchphrases, perspective, etc.

You could also consider trying out different announcer roles. Depending on what's available to you, you might try stream, production, and/or sponsorship announcing. Any time is a great time to try something new to see how you feel about it, and to expand your mind by comparing and contrasting what it's like to be in the driver's seat of each role. Who knows, you might find a new favorite part of announcing!

For Seasoned Announcers

You can definitely experiment with any of the same things mentioned above. No matter how far you are in your roller derby journey, you're never "stuck," you can always try new things on for size.

You also might set your sights beyond the game itself and comment on things like:

- League history.
- How previous games went (if this is a rematch).
- The stakes going into the game (examples: Is this the first/last game of the season? Does it determine the home team champions? Does the winner go to playoffs? Is it a fundraising competition? etc.).
- Any rivalries between teams or between individual skaters (examples: based on past stats, family members on opposing teams, etc.).
- WFTDA Rankings going into the game (if rankings are involved).

In other words, you have opportunities to highlight the importance of this particular game and what it means to the people involved. Think about this: if you get the audience invested in the gravity of the situation, that could ramp up their tension and excitement for every moment going forward. Now they're no longer just watching people skate, they're witnessing a truly epic sporting event.

Especially for stream announcers, you could strengthen your knowledge of tactics and strategies. Work with local leagues to understand how they use strategy and tactics. Watch what the top teams are doing as it does trickle down.

Something that will also take your announcing to the next level is your understanding of the rules and officiating. Learning to be a Non Skating Official (NSO) or Skating Official (SO/ref) will improve your knowledge of the whistles, hand signals, penalties, and gameplay.

You could also combine multiple announcer roles, such as layering production and/or sponsorship on top of whichever you're doing, in-house or streaming.

Kinds Of Calls And Announcements

During a game:

- Avoid saying things that could be offensive.
- Commentate on actions that have happened vs speculating.
- Avoid saying things that could affect the outcome, or information that is the responsibility of those on the track to be aware of (examples: a skater stands up in the penalty box, a skater re-enters the track, a jammer is coming up behind the opposing jammer).

You could commentate on things such as, but not limited to:

- Who's at the jam line.
- A jammer becomes lead jammer.
- How the jammer got through or around the pack.
- Efforts of the blockers.
- Teammates providing offense for their jammer.
- A star pass.
- A ref calls a penalty and who is sent to the penalty box.
- The jam will be the full two minutes.
- There's a jammer swap from the penalty box.
- There's a power jam.
- There's a power start.
- There's a rematch between jammers at the jam line.
- Someone is starting as a jammer for the first time in the game.
- Someone is recycled.
- The pack is spread out.
- The pack is in one big cluster.
- Someone exhibits extra skill (footwork, spinning,, apex jump, jersey whip, etc.).

- A jammer scores points.
- A lead jammer calls the jam (or the jam ends for another reason).
- The points each team scored at the end of a jam.

Obviously this isn't everything, and it's different depending on each announcer's personality, what kinds of things are exciting to them, what they feel comfortable calling out, etc. Regardless of your amount of experience, this should be plenty of options to pick and choose from, experiment with, layer on, or be inspired by.

The above things lean more toward play-by-play. Color commentary would be more up to each announcer's creativity or personality, as long as what's said still avoids being offensive or affecting the outcome.

Additional common announcements:

- Fit in sponsorship reads during things like timeouts and intermission. Or even between jams for giant events with many sponsors.
- If there's an official review and you're told the result, wait for the Head Ref to finish speaking with coaches and captains (and ideally then give you the ok) before announcing it.
- If applicable, announce last call for food/drinks/vendors etc. during a timeout or intermission, or between jams if needed.
- Miscellaneous announcements like lost and found items, cars with the lights left on, could also be during timeouts, intermission, or between jams if needed.

Day of the Game

You prepared, you showed up, now it's the day of the game. Here are things you can do before, during, and after a game.

Words of Wisdom: How do you prepare for game day?

“Very simple. Hydrate, sleep well, eat well, take your supplements and bring your own tea and honey. If you bring a bag of lozenges, you’re pretty much a pro. Also make sure you have a refillable water bottle at all times.” - *Cakes*

Before a Game

- Show up at least a half hour or hour before the first whistle of the first game, to turn on the sound equipment (if applicable), do sound checks, go over announcer printouts and game rosters, etc. The amount of advance time you need or get may vary, depending on the venue or event.
- Suggestion: If the sound equipment is yours or your home league's, replace the microphone batteries before every event, or every morning of a multi-day event. It's slightly overkill, but it's more fun than your mic going dead while you're talking mid-jam. The best scenario is keeping a container of fresh batteries on hand, if possible. Doesn't apply if you're using wired or rechargeable mics.
- Know where the announcers sit or stand, or work with the organisers to identify the best spot.
- Gather your announcing items: microphones, announcer printouts (venue rules, sponsorships, etc.), rosters, cheatsheets (like a derby rules overview, penalty hand signals, etc.), extra pen or pencil, a clipboard if needed, water bottle.
- If there are announcer printouts, look them over beforehand and ask for any needed clarification (or if you see discrepancies, typos, etc.).
- Optionally, ask each team if there are any birthdays, special occasions, or other things they want shouted out later.
- If there are more than one announcer, agree on a format (this is covered more in depth in the ["Announcing Formats"](#) section).

- Go around and meet the vendors, food truck, etc., to become familiar with what they have and to make it more interesting when you shout them out later. They're always grateful when you take the time to get to know them, and it helps make your venue more welcoming overall. If you see the same vendor return at a later event, that's a good sign!
- Sometimes announcers help facilitate events before a game, at halftime, or after a game. Examples are MVP awards, halftime games or shows, birthday surprises, etc. If you'll be doing that, confirm beforehand what you need to do and gather any items needed.
- Extra credit: check with the medics beforehand if they want in-house announcers to be silent during injury checks, or if announcers are preferred to continue with things like sponsor shoutouts to divert the crowd's attention from the incident.
- Make sure you're not wearing branded clothes from any teams who will be in the game. Being impartial goes beyond what you say—it applies to your whole presence, including your outfit.
- Start warming up your voice. An online search for vocal warmups will find you quick and handy exercises.
- Depending on the amount of pre-game notes in the announcer printouts, 5-7 minutes before the first whistle of the game, you can start welcoming the crowd, reading through safety and housekeeping notes, introduce the teams, read out the rosters of skaters and officials (if provided), and introduce yourself.

During a Game

- Avoid saying things that could be offensive.
- Commentate on actions that have happened, vs speculating.
- Avoid saying things that could affect the outcome, or information that is the responsibility of those on the track to be aware of (examples: a skater stands up in the penalty box, a skater re-enters the track, a jammer is coming up behind the opposing jammer).
- Specific things you could call out are covered in more depth in the "[Things to Talk About](#)" section.
- Stay hydrated. This can be easy to forget, but even though announcers aren't skating, this is still important.

- At the end of the first period, shoutout food, drink, merch, and other vendors, and remind the audience when to come back.
- At the start of the second period, welcome the audience back, recap the score, and briefly recap a few highlights from the first period.

After a Game

- Optionally, re-read the rosters and volunteer list. (Like the credits at the end of a movie. It's another way to give acknowledgement and thanks to the participants, if you choose to.)
- If the game has MVP's, remind teams to tell you their MVP selections. Then once the selections are in, announce them and hand out trophies if there are any.
- The announcer could optionally say a brief outro (examples: thanking people for coming, thanking the volunteers, congratulating all the teams, location of the afterparty, the date of the next game, etc.). Instead of everything immediately going silent, some form of farewell can demonstrate the hospitality of the league and raise people's overall impression of the event. Little things like this can add up and make the difference between people leaving feeling like they were merely spectators vs feeling like they themselves were part of an epic event.
- Depending on the venue, return announcing items to where they came from, tidy up the announcing area, dispose of trash/recyclables, turn off sound equipment, etc. If you're able to, you could also stick around to help with overall breakdown and cleanup. This is always appreciated!
- Make sure you have your water bottle, phone, keys, wallet, or other items before leaving, especially if it isn't your home venue.

Suggestions For Between Games

For multi-game events:

- Leave the track area or go outside for a while. Take a breather and find some time to decompress.
- Stretch, move around. Standing or sitting in one place throughout a game can fatigue you mentally and physically.
- Wear your earplugs or noise canceling headphones when you're not announcing.
- Hydrate and eat something.

- You could also watch part or all of a game that you're not announcing. Sometimes it's rare for announcers to get to sit back and watch a game. If you have the bandwidth, you could take advantage of this. (Make sure this is okay with the event coordinator beforehand. Certain events may have tighter admission and less flexibility to watch games you're not directly involved with.)
- Talk to your Head Announcer (or if there isn't one, talk to the volunteer or event coordinator) about any concerns.

Pronouns and Pronunciation

Confirm name pronunciations and pronouns before each game. **This is crucial!**

Mispronunciations or misgenderings can happen at all levels of play, with new and seasoned announcers alike. But the good news is, these mistakes can be preventable.

Here's a suggestion to avoid pronunciation mistakes:

- Before the game, go to each team, read all the names from that team's roster aloud, and write down any corrections, clarifications, or substitutions they tell you.
- This assures that you're able to say the names correctly. It also avoids you assuming you know the right pronunciation, saying a name wrong, then being corrected.

Here's a suggestion to avoid pronoun mistakes:

- Don't use pronouns at all. Only use derby name, team name or color and their number, or team name or color and their position (examples: "blue 56," "Whoopie Cushions blocker").
- "They/Them" is not a catch-all. If you don't have a printout that includes pronouns, try the approach above instead. And printouts might have typos, so the only 100% guaranteed way to never say a wrong pronoun is to not use pronouns at all, as mentioned above.
- The latest WFTDA guidance is to not ask skaters for pronouns. You could use pronouns that are listed on rosters (if provided), or omit pronouns altogether, as mentioned above.
- Your diligence with this is a big part of helping everyone have a good time, and it demonstrates that you value and respect each individual person.

Making Mistakes

We're all human, we all make mistakes. When it happens, what do you do?

Words of Wisdom: What's the biggest mistake you've made?

"All the times I've mispronounced someone's name/skate name for an entire game still haunts me." - *Juke Special*

"The biggest mistake I ever made was putting more stock in what others thought than what I thought of myself. Having pure enjoyment of calling a game you love should be at the forefront of why you're there. Remember that when you make these mistakes because you will make mistakes. But you're also human and you're allowed to fall just as often as a skater does. The important part is that your intentions are good in nature and you want to call the game at the best of your ability no matter what level you start at." - *Cakes*

People Mistakes

Such as misgendering, misidentifying, or misnaming someone.

If you misgender someone:

- Be respectful when corrected, and thank the person correcting you.
- Own your mistake, apologize, and move on. Do not defend your error.
- Pronouns are not a joke—don't turn them into one.

Source: [WFTDA Code of Conduct Toolkit](#)

If you misidentify or misname someone:

- Regardless if the misidentification was due to similar numbers (such as 22 vs 022, 119 vs 911), similar height or size, or other causes, don't provide incidental reasoning as to why the misstatement happened.
- Apologize, make the correction, and keep going.

If you misidentify or misname someone based on skin color:

- Apologize directly, specifically, and immediately (between jams is acceptable during an active game). Failure to acknowledge the damage of even unintentional actions is a violation of the WFTDA Code of Conduct. It is more important to foster a safe, welcoming community than to perform false infallibility and/or avoid the need to reflect on internal biases.
- Captains may inform the Head Officials at the Captain's Meeting that any interactions regarding misidentification should be delivered to the Team Captain rather than an affected skater.
- Don't expect or force someone who has been misidentified to discuss or accept the apology. The WFTDA recognizes that being misidentified may be a triggering or upsetting experience and does not expect victims to do the emotional labor of supporting those who have committed the error. While participants are expected to abide by the WFTDA Code of Conduct at all times, acknowledging that the apology has been received is all that is expected.
- Don't provide incidental reasoning as to why the misstatement happened. The reason is irrelevant to the damage that was caused. Doing so calls more attention to the proclaimed innocence of bias than the ownership of the microaggression.

Source: [WFTDA Officiating Clarification: How to Handle Issues Around Skater Colors and Numbers](#)

We encourage you to read further guidance in the [WFTDA Announcer Inclusion Policy](#).

Gameplay Mistakes

Such as announcing the scoreboard information or track action wrong.

If you misread the scoreboard:

Apologize, make the correction, and keep going. Moving forward, give yourself a moment to organize new scoreboard information in your head before announcing it.

Keep in mind the scoreboard operators are human too, and they rely on multiple other humans for what information to show in the first place. Things like scores, jammer names, who is lead jammer, the kind of timeout, and other info may appear incorrectly then be adjusted. If you notice a habit of this, you could wait a few moments before announcing new scoreboard information, in case there are adjustments.

If you incorrectly narrate the action on the track:

Some examples:

- You see a skater putting on the star helmet cover and you say there's a star pass, but there wasn't a star pass, it was the starting jammer putting the helmet cover back on after removing it.
- You say a skater completed a scoring lap, but it was the initial pass.
- You incorrectly say what kind of penalty sent a skater to the penalty box.
- You say a skater stayed in-bounds, but the skater receives a track cut penalty.
- Or any other action-related error.

Apologize, make the correction, and keep going. Moving forward, give yourself a moment to make sure you saw what you think you saw before announcing it. If you aren't 100% sure what happened, simply don't comment on it.

Everyone out on the track is human too. Officials sometimes make mistakes then adjust. This may result in you announcing something based on what the officials initially called, then having to correct it. When this happens, refrain from commenting on the official or officials as individuals, or the quality or style of officiating; refrain from disagreeing with officiating calls on the microphone, etc. Once the officials have made the correction, announce it and keep going.

More Examples of Things to Avoid

Learn from announcers that have come before you; avoid these mistakes!

What: Calling the end of a jam/period/game before the officials do.

Why: It's possible for changes to be made to the scoreboard clock, or other adjustments that would involve continued play. For things indicated by whistles (examples: the end of a jam, the end of a game), it's generally a good idea to comment on them after you hear the whistles, which means it's official.

What: Praising an impressive but dangerous behavior or penalty.

Why: Roller derby is a contact sport, and sometimes a dangerous one. You may want to express how strong a hit was, how hard someone fell, but we advise you not to. We do not encourage actions that could lead to injuries or bad behavior. For example, it's not "cool" to foul out or to hurt someone on purpose. It's not badass, it's just stupid. Our advice is to not emphasize it, just let it go.

What: Openly disagreeing with a call or a strategy.

Why: You may disagree, but it's not your place as an announcer to give your opinion to the public, teams, and officials. Your job is not to coach a team or to ask for an official review.

What: Making inappropriate jokes.

Why: As we said before, this is not a stand-up act and your humour may not be for everyone. Mocking, shaming, blaming is not okay. Most derby events are now filled with families; adapt your language and be respectful. Roller derby is fun, family friendly, and inclusive.

What: Repeatedly announcing the score if the gap is big.

Why: The teams know, the public knows. When a game is not tied, there are other things to say than the score. Players on track can feel down if you remind them that they are 150 points behind. Instead we advise you to talk about their great spirit, the fellowship on track, etc.

What: Announcing how much time is left in the jam or period, especially if the score is close.

Why: This may influence teams' strategy or provide a tactical advantage. Remember, you want to avoid saying things that possibly affect gameplay.

What: Assuming the nationality of players based on the team they are in. (Example: "The French team.")

Why: Teams might have skaters located all over the world who come together to participate for various reasons.

What: Referring to skaters by skin color or other non-game-related characteristics.

Why: Using derby name, team name or color and number, or team name or color and position to refer to skaters demonstrates inclusion and avoids unconscious bias or racially-based statements.

Sample Templates

The next pages have assorted blank templates to jot down live game action. So you don't have to scribble all over your rosters and announcer printouts! Feel free to print extra copies.

Bobby Narco's Producer Stats Sheet

 stat tracking template.pdf

Highest scoring jam of the game so far

Team name or color:	Team name or color:
Points:	Points:

Who has started as a jammer for each team?

Team:		
Skater # and name:		
Skater # and name:		
Skater # and name:		
Skater # and name:		
Skater # and name:		
Skater # and name:		

Official review results

Which team called the review?	What were they asking for?	What did the refs determine?	Was the official review retained?
			Yes / No
			Yes / No
			Yes / No
			Yes / No

Other notes

Self-feedback from events

Event description (date, name, and/or location)
What announcing role(s) did you do?
What went well?
What do you want to change for next time?

Event description (date, name, and/or location)
What announcing role(s) did you do?
What went well?
What do you want to change for next time?

Event description (date, name, and/or location)
What announcing role(s) did you do?
What went well?
What do you want to change for next time?

Community Involvement

Other ways to be present for your league and derby community.

Words of Wisdom: What does announcing mean to you?

"It's my way of trying to help my sk8 community!" - *Pepper*

As an announcer, you already provide amazing contributions to your roller derby community. But maybe you're so passionate about roller derby that you want to help even more—awesome!

If you're already involved with your league because you also skate, officiate, or do other volunteering, you may already know other ways to help out.

If you're looking for things you can do to help your league, here are some ideas:

- Ask! When you're at your home venue, or if your league has a message board, Slack, or volunteer email, reach out and ask how you can help. Roller derby always needs more volunteers, so even a simple, "Hi, I want to help out more but I don't know how!" could get a conversation started.
- If you skate or you're going to skate for your league, ask what committees there are. See which ones you're most enthusiastic about and if you can help, officially as a potential member of the committee or unofficially as additional support.
- Each time there's an upcoming game, there's likely also a signup post, volunteer form, or some other intake for people who want to help. Even if nothing gets posted, this is a great time to ask how you can help. Game days always need help!
- There could also be random one-off asks, like if someone needs a pet sitter, needs help moving, needs a ride to practice or to a game, someone's looking for secondhand gear, etc. Any chance to help someone is a chance for you to step up and make someone's day brighter.

Whatever you choose to do, remember to also prioritize your life, work, family, or any other important things you have going on. Roller derby always needs more volunteers, but balance it out with taking care of yourself too!

THANK YOU!

There aren't enough roller derby volunteers, and there especially aren't enough announcers. You show up, and with your voice and personality you give everyone a fun, memorable event. Thank you for being part of the derby community, and thank you for being an announcer!

We also want to thank all the amazing announcers who gave us their thoughts, tips, tricks, and examples to develop this guide. We built this guide as a community and couldn't have done it without all of your support.

Sincerely,

Your WFTDA Announcing Development Committee:

AK 40oz

Bob deQuickly

Chelvi Bomb

Cinna-bomb Roll

Comic Drop

Diss Cussions

dorkmistress

Hémo'

Iron Lung

Jumping Spider

PR Mageddon

Say-J

Shady Hawkins

Sven WilllbeFamous

TchaiKILLsky

Further Resources

Here are some places to help start or continue your learning.

WFTDA Announcing Development Committee Announcing Booklet

The electronic version of this booklet that you can share, download, or print.

<https://static.wftda.com/files/wftda-announcer-guide.pdf>

Sample Announcer CV Template

Make a copy and log the games you announce.

<https://resources.wftda.org/wftda-announcer-cv-template>

WFTDA Officiating Cues, Codes, and Signals

A guide to officiating cues and hand signals.

<https://static.wftda.com/officiating/wftda-officiating-cues-codes-and-signals.pdf>

WFTDA Announcer Job Descriptions

Different roles announcers do. How many can you try?

<https://resources.wftda.org/wftda-announcer-job-descriptions/>

The Rules of Flat Track Roller Derby

All of them.

<https://resources.wftda.org/rules/>

WFTDA Rules Casebook

Do you love nerding out on super specific "what if"s? Here's your rabbit hole!

<https://rules.wftda.com/casebook>

Roller Derby Streaming On Youtube

Find free games to watch or practice making calls.

https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=roller+derby+streaming

WFTDA YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/@thewftda>

Association of Flat Track Derby Announcers How to Videos

A series of videos talking through different roles and aspects of announcing.

<https://www.youtube.com/@rollerderbyannouncersassoc1875/videos>

Credits

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Hémo'

Loud & Queer

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Cakes, @c8k3 (Instagram)

Es Terminate

Hémo' @hemo_speaks_derby (instagram)

Holly

Juke Special, @howlieT (Instagram & Bluesky)

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Pepper

Rippi Longstocking

Whippin' Red Siren, Rotterdam Roller Derby/Team Nederland Roller Derby