



October 7, 2015

Dear Mr. Dubi, Mr. McConnell, and Mr. Wassmer:

I am writing on behalf of women's flat track roller derby to share information about the sport, its global growth and current position, and its internationally recognized governing body, the Women's Flat Track Derby Association (WFTDA). I am also writing because an IOC-recognized international federation, the Fédération Internationale de Roller Sports (FIRS), has recently taken actions toward claiming and governing roller derby under its umbrella. With this letter, the WFTDA wishes to formally dispute FIRS' claims of governance over flat track roller derby and document the sport's recognition of the WFTDA as the primary governing body for the sport.

Roller derby appeared in the United States as a legitimate sport around 2001, having entered the public consciousness decades before in 1935 as an entertainment product for live fans and television. The newly revived sport spread quickly, and early leagues began talking about interleague competition and standard rulesets. In 2005, 20 established leagues assembled for the first congress of roller derby and founded the WFTDA to govern the sport. Over the next ten years, the WFTDA membership grew rapidly. The WFTDA currently claims 415 leagues and more than 20,000 skaters in its constituency. WFTDA member leagues exist in North America, Australia, Europe, South America, Asia and Africa.

The WFTDA develops and publishes all the rules, standards and other guidelines by which the sport of roller derby is played worldwide. These WFTDA rules and standards are publicly available and utilized by almost all leagues worldwide, regardless of whether they are members of the WFTDA. The vast majority of roller derby globally is played by the WFTDA rules and using the WFTDA's standards and resources. (As of May 2015, 1717 leagues globally reported playing under the *Rules of Flat Track Roller Derby* published by WFTDA.) The WFTDA also promotes athletic competition among our member leagues with public rankings and competitive pathways such as tournaments, where the highest level of roller derby play is showcased to a worldwide audience. Additionally, the WFTDA generates safety protocols for the sport, including recommendations for protective equipment, facility safety, return to play after injury and emergency medical protocols. The WFTDA is regarded as the leader and dominant governing body in the sport.

Furthermore, the WFTDA is the center of knowledge, training and certification for roller derby officials. Since 2008, the WFTDA has offered education for officials, consisting of a rigorous program of training, testing, evaluation and certification. At this time, the WFTDA has certified 400 officials in five levels of skating and non-skating officiating. Each year the WFTDA hosts officiating clinics that are available in more than a dozen locations worldwide. This year we are conducting training clinics in North and South America, Europe and Australia. The WFTDA produces and owns officiating resources such as the WFTDA Rules of Flat Track Roller Derby, Officiating Standard Practices (including hand signals and verbal cues), game statistic workbooks and manuals, and officiating assessment documents.

Unique among sports bodies, the WFTDA is dedicated to democratic principles and to making athletes the driving force of decisionmaking. The WFTDA is managed democratically, as are all of its member leagues. While other sports in the Olympic movement struggle to identify "athlete representatives" to participate in governance, roller derby is organized around the idea that the athletes are the owners and operators of the organization and the foundation of decision making and governance. The WFTDA is partnered with the Men's Roller Derby Association and the brand new Junior Flat Track Derby Association, both of which share our commitment to democracy.



FIRS has recently realized the accelerated, stable and powerful growth of roller derby. Due to the significant numbers and financial resources our athletes potentially represent, it is attempting to bring roller derby under its regulatory umbrella. FIRS is unknowledgeable about the sport and its community, and cannot provide any legitimate evidence of its contributions to the establishment, development or governance of flat track roller derby. FIRS has been unable to achieve a level of resources, unity, or support for its existing disciplines, about whom it is presumably already very knowledgeable and invested relative to those of the WFTDA.

The WFTDA has successfully managed flat track roller derby for a decade. We have developed an effective and strong community of athletes, coaches, and officials, which is capable of governing the sport independently. The WFTDA has the unified support of tens of thousands of athletes, coaches and officials from six continents. We wish to continue to build consensus and leverage that support, allowing those who are involved as experts in the sport to continue to govern independently, democratically and in a unified manner. We are prepared to do whatever we need to in order to comply with IOC guidelines, so long as we are able to protect the integrity and independent governance of our sport.

Please reach out if you need additional information or would like to discuss this further.

Sincerely,
Juliana Gonzales, Executive Director
Amanda Hull, President
Amy Spears, Vice President
Michele K. Donnelly, Secretary
Heather Watson, Treasurer
Anna Krajcik, Ex Officio