



The Rules of Flat Track Roller Derby

2023 Change Summary

Summary of changes to *The Rules of Flat Track Roller Derby* effective January 1, 2023.

Rules

2.3

The Engagement Zone is the area in which it is legal for Blockers to engage or be engaged. The Engagement Zone extends forward and backward 20 ft (6.10m) from the foremost and rearmost Pack Skaters, respectively. Any Blocker outside of the Engagement Zone is out of play and cannot engage or be engaged. Blockers who are outside of the Engagement Zone will be warned, and will be penalized if they do not immediately attempt to return to the Engagement Zone. Blockers ahead of the Engagement Zone are only compelled to skate clockwise to return to the Engagement Zone if the Pack is stopped or moving clockwise.

Skaters who are illegally blocked while out of play may legally counter-block, *but may not initiate new blocks or continue blocking beyond what is necessary for safety.*

Skaters who are blocked while completely out of bounds may actively absorb the block, but may not continue counter-blocking beyond that, and may not initiate a new block.

2.4

“Blocking” refers to any physical contact made to an opponent, and to any movement or placement of one’s body to impede said opponent’s speed or movement, during a Jam, whether or not contact is made. Counter-blocking is any movement towards an oncoming block by the receiving Skater *designed to counteract an opponent’s block.*

Counter-blocking is blocking. Actions that meet the above description are considered blocking, even if accidental. Contact made to teammates is not considered blocking even if it is a disadvantage to the initiator or teammate.

Glossary

Actively Absorbing

Any movement toward oncoming contact intended only to protect the recipient of the contact.

Counter-Block

Any motion/movement toward an oncoming block by the receiving opponent designed to counteract an opponent's block. Counter-blocking is treated as blocking and held to the same standards and rules (except where specified). **Continued engagement which goes beyond countering the initial effect of the opponent's block should be considered a separate block, and judged separately.**

Initiator

The Skater who is responsible for contact happening to an opponent (initiating a block) or teammate (initiating an assist). A Skater can also initiate their own assist by taking a whip off of a teammate's body, or initiate a counter-block in response to an opponent's block. The initiator of a block or assist is always responsible for the legality of the contact.

After a counter-block, continued engagement by the counter-blocking skater should be considered a new action, with the skater responsible for the continued contact considered the initiator. The legality of this action should be judged separately from the initial block and counter-block.

Casebook

Scenario C4.1.3.A

White Pivot stands still on their toe stops and initiates a block against Red Jammer. Red Jammer ~~does not fall~~ counter-blocks, but is brought to a stop **by the White Pivot, who remains stopped.** ~~Red Jammer counter-blocks, but White Pivot continues to block while on their toe stops and Red Jammer is unable to get past.~~

Outcome: White Pivot is penalized.

Rationale: If Red Jammer loses position or has their momentum or trajectory severely affected by a block initiated in an ~~unexpected~~ **illegal** way, the initiator should receive a penalty. In this example, if White Pivot had not maintained their stopped ~~block but instead returned to counterclockwise skating, allowing Red Jammer to maintain part of their momentum, it would not have resulted in a penalty~~ position, but had returned to counterclockwise motion while blocking, no penalty would be warranted.

Keep in Mind: It is not the use of toe stops that warrants penalization in this scenario, but the fact that the White Pivot had an impact on the Red Jammer while stopped. If White Pivot had continued to move counter-clockwise on the track while on their toe stops, no penalty would have been warranted.

Scenario C4.1.3.C

Red Jammer is 18 ft (5.48 m) ahead of the Pack alongside White Pivot. They continue to skate, and an Official gives an Out of Play warning to ~~White Pivot~~ **both players.** White Pivot

continues to skate alongside Red Jammer, and then blocks Red Jammer, making hip-to-hip contact. Red Jammer counter-blocks White Pivot [in an attempt to remain upright and continue on their way](#). White Pivot falls as a result.

Outcome: White Pivot is penalized. Red Jammer is not.

Rationale: White Pivot received an Out of Play warning and failed to immediately attempt to return to the Engagement Zone; rather, they continued to block Red Jammer. Skaters who are illegally blocked while out of play may legally counter-block, so Red Jammer's actions do not warrant a penalty.

Keep in Mind: If Red Jammer's action was not a counter-block, but instead a separate and distinct initiation of a block, Red Jammer should be penalized as White Pivot falling is enough impact to warrant a penalty for illegal contact.

[Scenario C4.1.3.H](#)

Red Jammer is 18 ft (5.48 m) ahead of the pack. White Pivot is alongside Red Jammer. They skate forward, and an Official gives an Out of Play warning to both players. After the warning is given, White Pivot initiates a block to Red Jammer. Red Jammer counter-blocks and is able to maintain their upright status and their momentum. Red Jammer then actively continues blocking White Pivot until White Pivot is Out of Bounds.

Outcome: Both players are penalized.

Rationale: Both players received an Out of Play warning. White Pivot illegally failed to immediately attempt to return to the engagement zone. Skaters who are illegally blocked while Out of Play may legally counter-block, so Red Jammer's initial counter-block does not warrant a penalty.

Red Jammer's continued blocking after absorbing the impact of White Pivot's block should be considered a new block. While Jammers are never considered Out of Play, blocking an Out of Play skater is illegal for all Skaters. By significantly altering White Pivot's trajectory, Red Jammer's illegal block had sufficient impact to warrant a penalty.

Keep In Mind: Initiating a block after an Out of Play warning is, by definition, failing to attempt to return to the engagement zone. As such, White Pivot should be penalized for maintaining an illegal position regardless of the impact of their block on the Red Jammer.

[Scenario C4.1.I](#)

White Blocker is standing while legally out of bounds. A Red Blocker is blocked off the track and collides with the White Blocker. White Blocker moves toward the Red Blocker and brings up their arms to actively absorb the force of the contact and protect both Skaters. Red Blocker falls to the ground as a result of the contact.

Outcome: No penalty.

Rationale: While White Blocker moved towards the opposing block, the purpose of the action was to actively absorb the contact, rather than intentionally force the Red Blocker down. The White Blocker's action was taken in the interest of safety, and should not be penalized. The preservation of player safety supersedes any gameplay concern not already enumerated in the Rules.

Scenario C4.1.3.J

White Pivot is currently the only white Blocker in the Pack. White Jammer approaches White Pivot and initiates an assist off White Pivot, which abruptly reduces White Pivot's speed enough to cause them to fall back more than 10 ft. (3 meters).

Outcome: Officials declare a No Pack situation. No penalty.

Rationale: The destruction of the Pack occurred as a result of normal gameplay. It should not be considered an illegal Pack destruction.

Keep in Mind: Taking or giving assists are considered parts of normal gameplay. If the White Jammer instead pushed White Pivot out of bounds or to the ground, White Jammer should be penalized instead. This action is considered a deliberate destruction of the Pack, and the White Jammer should be issued a penalty for Unsportsing Conduct (Misconduct).

Scenario C4.1.3.E

White ~~Blocker~~ Jammer, having lined up just ~~front~~ behind the Jammer Line, is contacted by Red ~~Pivot~~ Jammer attempting to take the same space. White ~~Blocker~~ Jammer falls out of bounds before the Jam-Starting Whistle.

Outcome: Red ~~Blocker~~ Jammer is penalized for blocking before the Jam start. White ~~Blocker~~ Jammer is allowed to participate in this Jam. Red Jammer has lost the ability to earn Lead Jammer status in this Jam.

Rationale: It is illegal to block before a Jam has begun. Because White ~~Blocker~~ Jammer was not in a legal starting position due to an opponent's illegal action, they are allowed to participate in the Jam.

Keep in Mind: Should White ~~Blocker~~ Jammer be blocked into a false starting position rather than out of bounds, White ~~Blocker~~ Jammer is allowed to participate in the Jam (without the need to yield). Red ~~Pivot~~ Jammer would still receive a penalty for blocking before the Jam start.

Keep in Mind: A Skater penalized before the start of a Jam should serve their penalty in the position in which they appear to be acting.

Scenario C2.2.2.C

White Jammer makes their way through the Pack on their initial trip, while Red Jammer remains stuck at the rear. Through numerous blocks and changes in position, White Jammer earns a pass on all Blockers, but none of them are ever the foremost Blocker in the Pack when White Jammer earns the pass.

Outcome: The Jammer Referee should not declare White Jammer Lead (yet).

Rationale: White Jammer has earned a pass against all Blockers, but has never ~~earned~~ established superior position to the foremost Blocker in the Pack. Lead Jammer is earned when the Jammer has earned a pass on all in-play Blockers and established a superior position to the foremost in-play Blocker.