IN-LINE SKATING

A Brief History of Roller Skating

**Early 1700’s -** In Holland, an unknown Dutchman decided to go ice skating in the summer. So he nailed wooden spools and attached them to his shoes. Skeelers was the nickname given to the new dry land skaters.

**1760 -** London inventor Joseph Merlin attended a party wearing one of his new inventions. metal wheeled boots. He made a grand entrance while playing a violin. However, he crashed into the very expensive wall-length mirror!

**1818 -** In Berlin Germany a ballet called for ice-skating but because it was impossible at that time to produce ice on a stage, roller skates were substituted.

**1819 -** In France, the first patent for a roller skate was issued to Monsieur Petibledin. It was made of a wood sole attached to the bottom of a boot, fitted with two to four rollers made of copper, wood or ivory and arranged in a straight line.

**1823 -** Robert John Tyers of London patented a skate called the Rolito with 5 wheels in a single row on the bottom of a shoe or boot.

**1857 -** Huge public rinks opened in London.

**1863 -** American, **James Plimpton,** found a way to make a very useable pair of skates. **Plimpton’s** skates had 2 parallel sets of wheels, one pair under the ball of the foot and the other pair under the heel. His design was the first dry-land skate that could maneuver in a smooth curve. This is considered the birth of the modern four-wheeled roller skates.

**1884 -** The invention of pin ball-bearing wheels made rolling easier and skates lighter.

**1902 -** Over 7,000 people attended the opening of public skating in the Coliseum in Chicago.

**1908 -** Madison Square Gardens in New York became a skating rink. The sport was becoming very popular and various versions of the roller skating developed: Recreational skating on indoor and outdoor rinks, polo skating, ballroom roller dancing and competitive speed skating.

**1960s -** Technology with the advent of plastics helped the wheel truly come of age with new designs.

**The late 70’s through mid 80’s -** A second big skating boom occurred with disco roller skating.

**1979 -** Brothers, Scott and Brennan Olson, who were hockey players living in Minneapolis, MN found an antique pair of roller skates. It was one of the earl skates that used the in-line wheels rather than the four -wheeled parallel design of Plimpton. They were intrigued by the in-line design and began redesigning roller skates. They took the design of the antique skates and used modern material. They used polyurethane wheels, attached the skates to ice hockey boots and added a rubber toe-brake to their new design.

**1983 -** Scott Olson founded Rollerblade, Inc. and the term rollerblading meant the sport of in-line skating because Rollerblade, Inc was the only manufacturer of in-line skates for a long time. Over the years Rollerblade, Inc has continued to improve their product.

**SAFETY**

Inline skating is an inherently dangerous activity which can result in serious debilitating injuries. YOU are the only one who can reduce the risks relating to inline skating. The two most important things that you can do to prevent injuries related to inline skating are:

            1. Always wear full protective gear properly.

            2. Always maintain control.

Full protective gear includes wrist guards, knee pads, elbow pads and a helmet. Although protective gear cannot fully protect you in every situation.

**RULES OF THE ROAD**

1. Always check equipment before skating. Check the axles for tightness, inspect the brake stopper and wheels for wear and proper tightness. Lace skates tightly. To close the buckle, place the strap into the receptacle and close the buckle. To tighten the closure, reopen the buckle and extend the strap further into the receptacle.

2. Those just beginning to learn to skate should skate in a traffic-free parking lot or playground with grassy areas to fall on.

3. ALWAYS SKATE IN CONTROL. Know your ability.

4. When skating on sidewalks or pathways stay on the RIGHT-HAND side and watch out for pedestrians, dogs, cyclists and other skaters. Pass on the LEFT-HAND side.

5. Be courteous. It will help the pathways be a safer and more enjoyable place to skate.

6. Avoid skating where there is water, oil, soft tar or other obstructions on the surface. These can cause you to slip and fall. Water can also be damaging to the bearings.

7. Hills can be dangerous! Use caution and common sense. Think about what can happen at the bottom of the hill, think about the car that can come out of a driveway, think about how you are going to stop.

**SKATING STANCE**

Lower your center of gravity by bending your knees and ankles and leaning *slightly* forward at the waist (like sitting in a chair). This stance will maximize your balance. Your center of gravity is OVER your skates.

**PUSH AND GLIDE**

Push outward and slightly back with your right skate. Let yourself glide with your full weight on your left skate. Circle your right skate back under your body. Begin to push off againthis time using your left skate.

Repeat these strides a few times, and before you know it you will be skating!

**STOPPING**

THIS IS A CRITICAL SKILL.

One method is to use your rear brake. But do NOT depend on this method to bring you to a complete stop immediately. When using this method you need to be in the proper skating stance. Your center of gravity needs to be centered OVER your skates. Once you feel stable, extend your braking foot forward and pull your toes up, pressing down on the brake. Maintain 60% of your weight on the front skate and 40% of your weight on the rear skate.. (This will keep you from spinning around.) This method will slow you down to a controllable speed and an eventual stop.

If you are not comfortable with this method you can begin to weave from one side to the other to slow you down. If all else fails, look for a grassy area on which to land!

**TURNING**

Turning is simple. To turn to the right place your weight on the inside edge of your left skate and the outside edge of your right skate. Keeping both legs together and your shoulders parallel to the ground, point your hips and toes to the right and coast. Pointing your hands in the direction you want to go will also help. Be careful not to exaggerate the motion and twist your upper body, or you will loose your balance.

To turn to the left place your weight on the inside edge of your right skate and the outside edge of your left skate. Large repeated turns right then left, etc is weaving and is another method to slow you down.

**SPEED**

Control is what skating is safely is all about. Always have a clear picture of what is around you and what may be ahead of you. Expect the unexpected. Be courteous of less experienced skaters. Pass them on the left. Verbally let them know your intention to pass. Pass them at a speed that will not challenge their balance.