

WOMEN'S FLAT TRACK DERBY ASSOCIATION
Minimum Skills Assessment Companion

Version 4.10
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1 BASIC SKATING SKILLS

1.1 Skating Posture

- 1.1.1 Bends at knees and hips with shoulders back.
- 1.1.2 Demonstrates stability, with center of gravity down and forward.
- 1.1.3 Demonstrates ability to skate low with bent, flexible knees.



1.1 Skating Posture

1.2 Stride

- 1.2.1 Uses steady, confident, fluid strides.
- 1.2.2 Uses both feet to push forward on straightaways.
- 1.2.3 Shifts weight completely from foot to foot without stumbling.



1.2 Stride

General Coaching Points:

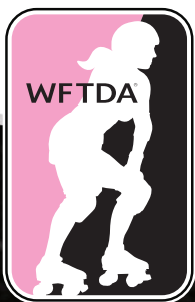
- Low center of gravity.
- Bend at the knees, not at the waist.
- Keep weight centered over skates and off of the toes.
- Push to the side, not to the back.
- Engage the core.
- Use glutes to generate power in the stride.

Assessment Drill: Skating Posture

- Have skaters skate the track at an easy pace.
- At the whistle, skaters lower into low skating form and stride for 30 seconds.
- At the second whistle, skaters relax into an upright stance, while continuing to skate.
- Repeat.

NOTE: Times can be adjusted to suit other objectives.

Skating Posture	
Error	Correction
Bending forward at the waist	Bend at hips and knees as if sitting in a chair.
Straight legs and stiff knees	Keep a soft knee bend.



1.3 Crossovers

1.3.1 Performs smooth crossovers while skating straightaways and track turns.

1.3.2 Uses both feet to push during crossovers.

1.3.3 Performs reverse crossovers, crossing over the right foot to the outside of the track.



1.3 Crossovers

General Coaching Points:

- Skater should remain low during crossover; at no point should skater straighten leg.
- The lower the skating stance, the deeper and more effective the crossovers will be.

Crossovers	
Error	Correction
Hesitation to cross	Try stepping in crossover motion without skates to get the motion down, then step/crossover along a stationary wall with skates on to get a sense of where the feet need to be with knee.
Stumbling or tripping of self when crossing	Cross right foot over the left and pull the right heel snug to the left ankle before stepping down. Keep knees bent so that protective gear has room for the crossing motion.

1.4 Speed and Endurance

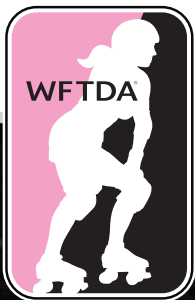
1.4.1 Skates at least 27 laps around regulation track within five minutes.

1.4.2 Accelerates from a standstill to complete one lap within 13 seconds.

General Coaching Points:

- Speed and endurance trials are when good form matters most!
- Tracing a diamond shape around the track, going wide on the straightaways and sharp into the apex, is the most efficient path.

Speed	
Error	Correction
Difficulty meeting speed requirements due to poor form	Encourage skater to bend at hips/knees. Push with all four wheels and out through the heel. Arm swing will move in opposition to the foot (i.e. left foot/right arm move together; right foot/left arm move together). Drive the foot to the side and “fall onto it” to give a good, hard conventional power push.
Difficulty meeting speed requirements due to inefficient track route	Encourage skater to skate the “diamond” or oval, to maintain full crossovers around the track; skate close to the apex, and out toward the outside of the straightaways.



1.5 Stops

Skater must come to a complete stop from a brisk pace within four seconds, using proper form and without losing balance.

1.5.1 T-Stop

1.5.1.1 Balancing weight on one leg, other foot is turned at a 90° angle so the heel or arch of the turned foot is aligned with the heel of the other foot.

1.5.1.2 Maintaining balance on one leg, applies smooth pressure with the turned foot using the two outside wheels, the two front wheels or all four wheels (does not use only the two inside wheels).

General Coaching Points:

- Right foot T-Stop: Turn the right foot so that it is perpendicular, and behind the left skate. Maintain contact with the skating surface with all four wheels to create drag for slowing.
- Left foot T-Stop: Turn the left foot so that it is perpendicular, and behind the right skate. Maintain contact with the skating surface with all four wheels to create drag for slowing.



1.5 Stops

Assessment Drill: T-Stops

T-Stops on a Whistle Blow:

Skate at a moderate pace and on a whistle blast, come to a stop in a proper T-Stop. Resume skating and alternate with the other foot on the next whistle blast.

T-Stops	
Error	Correction
Ankle bends and only inner two wheels drag, chattering on the floor	Press foot flat or exaggerate foot motion to maintain contact with all four wheels or with only the outside edge wheels (contact with the right wheels on the right leg, or the left wheels on the left leg, rather than the inside wheels).
Trailing foot "stutters" when dragging	Engage inner thigh muscles more to draw legs together in a firmer stance. Tilt foot so that outside wheels drag.
Skater spins/turns when attempting to slow	Bend and hips/knees when initiating T-Stop.



1.5 Stops (continued)

1.5.2 Plow stop

1.5.2.1 Turns one or both feet so toes are pointing in and heels are pointing out.

1.5.2.2 Upon completion of stop, feet are in a position that would allow resumed skating (feet are not spread so wide apart skater must adjust stance before resuming skating).

General Coaching Points:

- With plow stops, be sure toes point inward and heels angle out. Chest faces forward and hips are bent so that skater is “sitting” over the plow stop and legs are not “V”ed out wide.



1.5.2 Plow Stop

Assessment Drill: Plow Stop at the Cones

Set up about 6-8 cones all in a line with about 10-15 or so feet in between them. Have skaters do an explosive acceleration to each cone, and then perform a sharp, quick plow stop. Skaters must come to a complete stop, and then repeat. When you get to the end of the row, skaters turn around and perform the action going back the other way. Coach stops the drill after a predetermined amount of time.

Plow Stops	
Error	Correction
Poor feet positioning allows roll	Point toes in and heels out.
Wide stance	Bring thighs more parallel as in an “A” frame position; drop butt/backside.
Bent at the waist	Keep upper body erect/chest up; bend at the knees and hips with butt/backside low.

1.6 Other Skating Skills

1.6.1 Performs one-foot glides with each foot for the length of the track turn and straightaway with good balance.

1.6.1.1 In low stance with one foot completely off the floor, able to balance weight over the other foot for at least five seconds.

1.6.1.2 Maintains speed sufficient to complete glide and does not flail limbs.

1.6.2 Propels self while keeping all eight wheels on the floor.



1.6.1 One-Foot Glides



General Coaching Points:

- For (1.6, 1.6.1, 1.6.1.1, 1.6.1.2): Watch for balance and control after the power push. No flailing while maintaining momentum for at least five seconds.
- For (1.6.2): Be sure skater demonstrates good skating posture while sculling to maintain floor contact with all eight wheels. Motion should create propulsion and acceleration.

Assessment Drill: One-Foot Glide

From a standstill at the Jammer Line, push off and glide on one foot in a controlled manner to the Pivot Line. Repeat action from the Pivot Line to the Jammer Line using the other foot.

Assessment Drill: Sit & Scull

While “sitting” in deep, 90° knee bend, derby position, skater sculls both feet PUSHING OUT and PULLING IN with all four wheels of both skates. Wheels DO NOT leave the skating surface.

This drill can be done in a variety of manners:

1. Use both feet equally.
2. 60 seconds pump only right foot; repeat 60 seconds pump only left foot (or whatever time is desired).
3. Sprint/race other skaters around the track or from one end of the skating space to the other.

Propelling Self with Wheels on the Floor

Error	Correction
Wheels leave the skating surface	“Sit” more by bending at hips/knees.
Skater pulls to one side	Use equal pressure through both feet.

1.6 Other Skating Skills (continued)

1.6.3 Moves easily and fluidly from one side of the track to the other.

1.6.3.1 Performs smooth, quick lateral cuts, crossing the track at least four times on each straightaway and at least three times on each track turn.

General Coaching Points:

- Watch for lateral movement, rather than forward progression. Skater should move in a controlled and fluid manner, without flailing or skating out of bounds.



1.6.3 Moves Easily and Fluidly from One Side of the Track to the Other

Assessment Drill: Lateral Steps on a Whistle Blow

Skaters begin skating at a moderate pace, with half of the skaters on the inside track line and half on the outside track line. Coach blows a whistle blast at random intervals. At the whistle, skaters move as quickly as possible from the starting track line to the opposite track line. Skaters continue to skate after the lateral transition. Be aware of skaters coming at opposition. Repeat for predetermined amount of time.



Lateral Movement	
Error	Correction
Wheels cross track boundary lines	Use deeper skate edges to reverse/cut direction of motion.
Too much forward progression; not enough lateral motion	Use deeper skate edges to reverse/cut direction of motion.

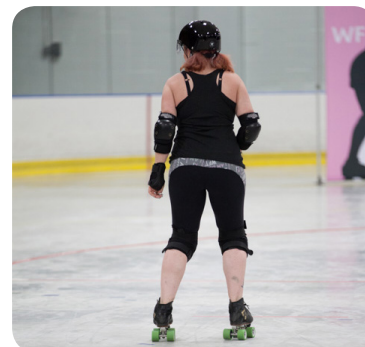
1.6 Other Skating Skills (continued)

1.6.4 Backwards skating within track boundaries.

1.6.4.1 Maintains moderate pace skating backward around the entire track.

General Coaching Points:

- Pay attention to stride, form, lower center of gravity, and bending at the hips and knees, not at the waist. Watch for erratic movement and lack of balance. Backward skating should be as fluid as forward skating motion.



1.6.4 Backwards Skating

Backwards Skating	
Error	Correction
Locked knees; Imbalance	Keep knees soft for balance and recovery.
Forward bend at waist	Keep bend at hips/knees.
Straight legs and stiff knees	Keep a soft knee bend.

2 RECOVERY TACTICS

Skater must perform the following recovery tactics safely, correctly and naturally. Skaters must be able to slide into knee contact with the floor, rather than crashing onto pads. Slides should be performed from a brisk pace without using hands or flailing arms. Recovery to a normal skating pace should be smooth and immediate, unless noted otherwise.

2.1 Knee Taps

2.1.1 Left.

2.1.2 Right.

2.1.3 Performs each knee tap without coming to a complete stop.

2.1.4 Taps a single knee without breaking normal skating stride.

2.1.5 Recovers from knee tap without using hands to get up.

2.1.6 Performs two consecutive single knee taps in stride, with low recovery.



2.1 Knee Taps



2.2 Double Knee Slides

- 2.2.1 Knees do not make contact with ground at exact same time.
- 2.2.2 Returns to active skating within three seconds.
- 2.2.3 Recovers without using hands to get up.
- 2.2.4 Momentum used to initiate the slide is continued into the recovery to normal skating motion.

General Coaching Points:

- Weight is shifted to skating leg to enable skater to tap the other knee without coming to a stop.
- General fitness can be an issue for some. Skater must be able to do a low single leg squat and support their weight for 3-5 seconds, and recover back to a standing position - and then do those motions on skates - to adequately perform these skills.

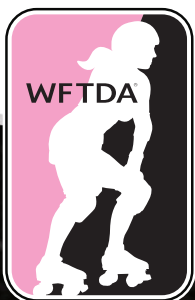


2.1 Double Knee Slides

Assessment Drill:

Blow the whistle and watch the skaters perform knee taps and slides. For double knee slides, it is common to count audibly after the whistle, to measure that the skater has recovered to normal skating within three seconds.

Knee Taps and Slides	
Error	Correction
Skater comes to a stop during single knee tap	Encourage skater to shift weight entirely to their not-tapping leg. Center weight will cause friction between the tapping knee and skating surface.
Skater's knee pads make an audible noise from hard contact when attempting a double knee slide	Encourage skater to start from a lower squat position and lower first one knee then the other into a slide.
Skater comes to a complete stop during double knee slide and/or cannot recover in the same skating motion	Encourage off-skates quad strength training that includes single and double leg squats, and balance exercises, including standing on one leg with a slightly bent knee for 30, 60 & 120 seconds.



3 BALANCE & AGILITY

Skater must demonstrate the ability to perform the following tasks without losing balance or falling.

3.1 Stepping from a Standstill

3.1.1 Forward and backward.

3.1.2 Side to side in both directions.



3.1 Stepping

3.2 Hopping

3.2.1 Hops over an object at least three inches in height, without touching the object or losing balance, while skating at a moderate pace.

3.2.1.1 Skater's feet must leave the ground simultaneously, then land simultaneously.

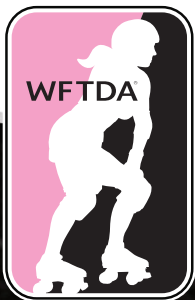
3.2.2 Skater hops from one foot to the other while moving forward.

General Coaching Points:

- Weight should be on balls of the feet, not heels.
- Movement should be quick.



3.2 Hopping



Assessment Drill: Hopping

Coach creates an obstacle course that includes cone barriers that require forward hops as well as lateral hops. Skaters line up and go through obstacle course one at a time. Coach encourages skaters to focus on form and “spring load” their hops and lift knees for vertical height, as well as to spring load outside leg when hopping laterally.

Hopping	
Error	Correction
Skater falls backwards	Encourage skater to bend knees, lean forward, and place weight on balls of feet.
Skater having trouble getting feet to leave ground; experiencing mental block	Encourage skater to recall how to hop in shoes: first bend knees, then use calves and quads to pop up.
Skater falls when they land	Encourage skater to squat upon landing.

3.3 Focus

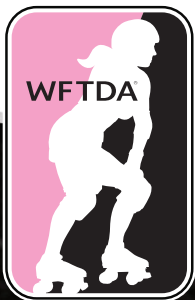
3.3.1 Can look left, right, and behind quickly and unexpectedly while maintaining regular skating stride at a moderate pace.

Assessment Drill: Focus

Skaters form a pack, must maintain awareness of coach at all times. Coach periodically holds up numbers on fingers, skaters must call out number to demonstrate awareness. Alternately, skaters can be assigned numbers and be made to perform knee taps when their number is shown.



3.3 Focus



3.4 Weaving

3.4.1 Maneuvers through 10 cones placed five feet apart, covering both straightaways and turns.

3.4.2 Weaves comfortably and briskly through a moderately moving pack of skaters without focusing on their own feet.



3.4 Weaving

General Coaching Points:

- Weaving with one foot in front will create sharper turns.
- Change which foot is in front with each cone; front foot should be foot closest to each cone, so foot weaves around and then in front of it.

Weaving	
Error	Correction
Skater misses cones	Encourage skater to put one foot in front of the other.
Skater starts to lag behind while going through the line	Encourage skater not to coast, to continue skating while weaving and use the edges to give momentum.
Skater starts to lag behind on the outside	Encourage skater to cut in more quickly and not go out so far when weaving around to the outside.

3.5 Transitions

3.5.1 Turns 180° without breaking stride, maintaining a moderate pace.

3.5.1.1 Turns clockwise and counterclockwise from front to back.

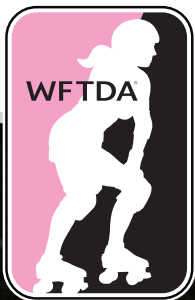
3.5.1.2 Turns clockwise and counterclockwise from back to front.

3.5.2 Turns 360° without breaking stride, from a moderate pace. Using two 180° turns in a row, without breaking stride, is acceptable.



3.5 Transitions

Transitions	
Error	Correction
Skater spins more than 180°	Skaters may not be picking up their feet or shifting weight properly. Leaning excessively or haphazardly can cause skater to spin in a circle.
Skater falls during transition	Encourage skater to try another method. Skaters who cannot lean it or walk it can sometimes jump it and vice versa.



4 SKATING WITH OTHERS

Skater must demonstrate the ability to perform the following skills legally and safely while skating at a moderate pace.

4.1 Whips

4.1.1 Giving whips.

4.1.1.1 Giving inside whips.

4.1.1.2 Giving outside whips.

4.1.2 Taking and providing hip, belt and clothing whips.

4.1.2.1 Consistently demonstrates the ability, judgment and timing to take a whip off another skater's body or clothing without pulling the other skater off-balance.

4.1.2.2 Consistently demonstrates the stability to provide hip and clothing whips without getting pulled off-balance.

4.1.3 Hip whips.

4.1.3.1 Giving hip whips.

4.1.3.2 Receiving hip whips.



4.1.2 Clothing Whips



4.1.3 Hip Whips

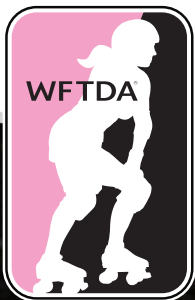
General Coaching Points:

- All whips should be given using strength of core muscles, never shoulders or arms.
- Skater giving an inside whip holds right arm against body, providing a hand as a "handle" for the receiver to grab and pull.
- Skater giving outside whip positions body with one foot extended in front of the other, and extends right arm to receiver. Receiving skater grasps the initiator's hand with their own right hand. The initiator of the whip, using core abdominal muscles, not the shoulder muscles, pulls the receiver, transferring momentum to the skater being whipped.

Assessment Drill: Inside/Outside Whips

- Skaters begin skating in groups of two. One skater will represent an initiating skater while the other a receiver. Both will focus on form.
- Each time the Coach blows the whistle, the initiating skater will give the receiver either an inside or outside whip (arms or hips and/or clothing whips) based on Coach's direction/discretion.

NOTE: Skaters can interchange roles as initiating skater and receiver.



Whips	
Error	Correction
Whipper gets pulled out of position when whipping	Usually occurs because their weight is centered over parallel feet, instead of having one foot forward. Encourage skater to lead with one foot and lean away from the person they're whipping.
Whipper pulls receiver using their shoulder or arm muscles instead of using core muscles and balance to transfer energy	Point out how easy it is to injure a shoulder. Encourage them to engage at the core and lean to whip, keeping their elbow BENT so that they don't use their bicep or shoulder to pull.
Potential receiver can't catch the whipper's hand	Ask the skaters to make eye contact as they grasp.
Pair don't have a strong connection	Make sure they're both grabbing right hand to right hand like a hand shake.
Receiver gets thrown out of bounds	Show the whipper how to follow the whip through so that their hand points towards where they want to put the receiver, usually towards the inside line boundaries, especially on a curve.
Receiver gets thrown off-balance	Encourage the whipper to keep use their core and keep their arm moving parallel to the ground (so they're not jerking their receiver to the ground or into the air). Encourage the receiver to skate out of the whip, rather than coasting, so they can correct any minor imbalance from the whip.

4.2 Pushes

4.2.1 Giving pushes.

4.2.1.1 Pushes receiving skater near receiver's center of gravity (hips or buttocks) with ample force to provide noticeable change in receiving skater's direction of momentum.

4.2.1.2 Pushes are centered and even (does not turn receiving skater's hips).

4.2.1.3 Pushes are parallel to the floor (does not push up, causing the receiver to be pushed off their feet, or down, causing the receiver to be pushed to the floor).

4.2.1.4 Maintains form and balance before, during and after pushing receiving skater.

4.2.2 Receiving pushes.

4.2.2.1 Uses momentum provided from a forward push to accelerate and begins skating within two seconds of push.

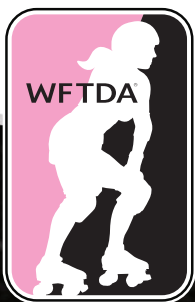
4.2.2.2 Maintains form and balance while receiving push forward, to left and/or right.



4.2.1 Giving Pushes



4.2.2 Receiving Pushes



General Coaching Points:

- Pushes should be centered and even, not turning receiving skater's hips.
- Pushes should be parallel to the floor. Pushing up could cause the receiver to be pushed off their feet. Pushing down could cause the receiver to be pushed to the floor.
- Pay attention to form and amount of force used while initiating a push. Hurried or poorly placed pushes may cause the receiver to fall.

Pushes	
Error	Correction
Receiver is pushed off-balance	Make sure the pusher is pushing evenly at the receiver's approximate center of gravity – not high on the receiver's back and pushing them to the ground, or pushing up, or pushing on one side and turning their hips.

4.3 Pacing

4.3.1 Skater adjusts to the variable speeds (decrease/increase) of a paceline, while maintaining an arm's length distance between themselves and the skaters in front of and behind them without falling, tripping, overtaking or running into another skater.

Assessment Drill: Pacing

Skaters form a tight pack, with pivot in the front. Pivot varies speed erratically and at will; skaters must match speed and never exceed an arm's length distance from nearest skater. No one should pass the pivot, especially during quick deceleration.



4.3 Pacing

4.4 Weaving Around Moving Obstacles

4.4.1 Demonstrates weaving through a single-file line of moving skaters who are each an arm's length apart.



4.4 Weaving Around Moving Obstacles



4.5 Unexpected Obstacles

4.5.1 Skating within a pack of at least four other skaters who fall in front of the skater at various unexpected times. Skater must deal with the fallen skater by avoiding or safely falling without hurting self or the fallen skater, and without causing an unnecessary hazard for any of the pack skaters.

Assessment Drill: Unexpected Obstacles

Skaters are all assigned a number from 1-5. There should be several skaters assigned to each number. All skaters form a tight pack. At random intervals, coach will call out a number and all those assigned to that number called will perform a single or double knee fall. All other skaters will demonstrate ability to avoid unexpected obstacles by avoiding fallen skaters.



4.5 Unexpected Obstacles

4.6 Leaning

4.6.1 Skates while leaning shoulder-to-shoulder with another skater while maintaining an upright position and propulsion without tripping, falling or becoming unsteady.



4.6 Leaning

4.7 Bumping

4.7.1 Maintains or recovers balance without falling, while being bumped into and having wheels bumped by other skaters.



4.7 Bumping



5 BLOCKING

Skater must demonstrate the ability to perform the following skills without fouling other skaters while skating at a moderate pace.

5.1 Taking Hits

5.1.1 Responds safely to repeated heavy blocks without flailing or grabbing other skaters. If the hit knocks the skater off balance, they fall safely, without sprawling, and demonstrate an ability to recover within two to four seconds.

5.1.2 Demonstrates the above in a pack situation, without causing an unnecessary hazard for pack skaters.

General Coaching Points:

- Strong core muscles and low skating stance assist in reducing impact from heavy blocks.
- Shortening the distance between blocker and target can minimize momentum and reduce impact of block.



5.1 Taking Hits

Assessment Drill: Giving/Taking Hits

All skaters are on the track. At the whistle, contact is permitted and all skaters hit targets of their choice. Any skater who falls, goes out of bounds, or fouls another skater is "out" and must leave the track. Continue until only one skater remains.

Taking Hits	
Error	Correction
Skater falls backwards when hit	Encourage skater to bend knees, skate lower into more aggressive skating stance.
Skater braces self for hits	Encourage skater to loosen muscles for more fluid adjustment, shifting of balance, during contact.

5.2 Positional Blocking and Leaning (aka frontal blocking or stall blocking)

5.2.1 Performs contact with good posture and without loss of balance.

5.2.2 Demonstrates ability to lean and push on an opponent with legal blocking zones to legal target zones while moving at moderate pack speed.

5.2.3 Demonstrate ability to plow stop in a pack without tripping other skaters in the pack.



5.2 Positional Blocking



5.2 Positional Blocking and Leaning (continued)

5.2.4 Demonstrate ability to use a plow stop to slow another skater.

5.2.4.1 Must be no more than two feet (0.5 meters) in front of other skater.

5.2.4.2 Other skater must have demonstrated decrease in pace due to blocking skater's positioning and/or contact.

Assessment Drill: Positional Blocking

Put skaters in pairs. One skater will positionally block the other until failure, either by allowing the skater to pass or by fouling their opponent. Skaters will then trade positions, so that the skater who was blocking is now trying to pass and vice versa. This can also be done with two skaters working together to positionally block as teammates.

Positional Blocking	
Error	Correction
Skater cannot maintain position, is quickly passed by opponent	Encourage skater to decrease distance between themselves and the opponent, to "sit on" the opponent so that they can feel and control their opponent's movement.
Skater consistently falls forward or backwards when trying to positionally block	Encourage skater to lower skating stance; skater is most likely moving too much with the torso and not enough with the lower body.

5.3 Checks

5.3.1 Demonstrates the ability to perform repetitive hip and body checks delivered with legal blocking zones to legal target zones with moderate to heavy force while skating at a brisk pace.

General Coaching Points:

- Always continue to move feet, never coast into a check.
- Check from areas of core strength; don't lean off balance.



5.3 Checks

Checks	
Error	Correction
Skater bounces off opponent	Encourage skater to skate "through" opponent, not "to" opponent. Try to replace position on the track.
Skater checks opponents in the face	Encourage skater to lower stance and hit with hips.



