



Keith Avallone,
PLAAY Games

roller rumble

classic roller derby game
Flat Track Edition

I attended a board game event in Colorado Springs couple weekends ago, GalaxyFest at the Antlers Hilton--not really a sports game crowd, but I did manage to corral a couple of non-sports gamers to play-test some new flat-track rules for ROLLER RUMBLE.

Sadly, as time passes, fewer and fewer people are remembering the original banked track derby. However, more and more people are connecting with the NEW brand of derby: grass-roots, flat track, with a "campy," punk rock sort of following. While I'll be the first to concede that these people are not likely to want to play a sports sim, I kind of feel like there's no where else to go with the roller derby game except to embrace the new derby. Mike Sagliano has created a flat-track variant for the game (the cards included in this "bundle"--HouseKnives, Dame Shames, Crushed Tomatoes and Gripe Jam--are Mike's creation), it's posted on the "free stuff" page. But I wanted to take a stab at something with fewer changes to the basic ROLLER RUMBLE game engine, and also expand the strategy elements so as to make it a stronger two-player game.

As I re-read the ROLLER RUMBLE rules, and compared them to the rules of contemporary flat track derby, I was pleasantly surprised to discover that the rules are not really so different after all. What's different, really, is the scoring process. So, here's what I came up with for a two-player flat-track version of ROLLER RUMBLE...

First, I adopted the current derby format of three blockers, a pivot, and a single jammer for each team. The fast-action card "jammer" quality readings apply only to the skaters in position [5]. (Other skaters can still contribute, though, as indicated.)

Second, I reduced the basic JAM track from three spaces to two, with the POWER JAM space now the third space. I also incorporated a rule that says any time a skater wins a quality check with a starred quality, their team gets to move TWO spaces down the jam track. This creates quicker jams, and more of them.

Next, I added a strategy element which is designed to increase the scoring to be closer to what you see in today's flat track derby. Each "coach" is given three color-coded cards: blue, yellow and red. The blue card represents a high speed, aggressive approach that's designed to maximize scoring. The red card represents the opposite: a hard-hitting, slow-moving "flying elbow" style that's designed to minimize scoring chances. The yellow card is, of course, the "middle ground" approach. BEFORE the first fast-action card is drawn, each coach chooses the card that corresponds to his/her strategy for that jam. Then the fast-action cards are flipped. First team to the JAM space has the choice to continuing for the POWER JAM. Once the JAM or POWER JAM is determined, both coaches reveal their cards, and the colors are combined, and the points indicated on the JAM reading of the fast-action card are adjusted based on the color combo, as follows...

BLUE: multiply points times five; GREEN: points times four; YELLOW: points times three; PURPLE, points times two; ORANGE: points as indicated on the FAC; RED: points halved, rounding down. (There's a code key printed on the new game board.)

EXAMPLE: The Houseknives coach secretly chooses the blue disc, the Gripe Jam coach secretly chooses the yellow. The FACs are flipped, and the Houseknives earn the lead jammer honors. The discs are revealed; combined they're "green," which means all points from the JAM reading will be quadrupled. The reading calls for 2 points for the lead jammer, and a FAST jammer scores three more. In the "green" mode, that means the Houseknives score 8, and the team with the FAST jammer--it could be either one, depending on who's in box [5]--gets 12 points.

Now, we didn't play test this extensively, but in the games we DID play, this seemed to work extremely well. Playing solitaire, you can use a single die roll to determine the jam color code. The resulting scores should be around 100 points per team instead of perhaps 30. We played three times through the fast-action deck for each 30-minute half.

I did an online search, looking over the current top roller derby flat track teams, and it was quickly apparent that stats tracking, results, rankings, reports and rosters are much improved over the past couple years. So theoretically, making card sets based on real-life flat track skaters would be more do-able now than it has ever been. However, I think the appeal of such sets would be limited, to say the least. A bigger issue, I think, is a seeming lack of competitiveness--epic blowouts seem to be quite common. We're talking scores like 430 to 33, or 535 to 8. Perhaps these are fun to watch in person, but recreating something like that on a tabletop would be, well, painful. Using the various home-brew flat track skater cards and the adjusted ROLLER RUMBLE rules as outlined above, should give the flavor of the flat track, but a higher percentage of competitive bouts. In our two exhibitions, the Crushed Tomatoes defeated the HouseKnives 131-106, and Dame Shames knocked off Gripe Jam 92-89.

Calling all ROLLER RUMBLERS: if you're curious, try these rules out and let us know what you think! The e-mail address is info@plaay.com...

BLAZIN'!

High speed,
aggressive
approach,
designed to
maximize scoring.

roller rumble
classic roller derby game
Flat Track Edition

BUSTIN'!

On-the-Fly style
of play, designed
to be a "middle
ground" strategy.

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BRUISIN'!

Hard-hitting,
slow-moving
"flying elbow" style
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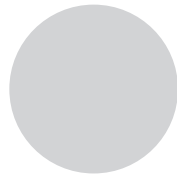
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visitor
start

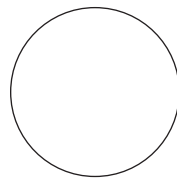
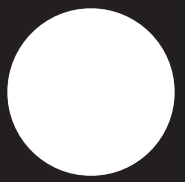


JAM!

POWER
JAM!



home
start



JAM!

POWER
JAM!

JAM Scoring Mode
POINT Modifier

(See instructions for use.)



roller
rumble

classic roller derby game

Flat Track Edition

blocker	blocker	pivot	any skater	jammer

1	2	3	4	5
blocker	blocker	pivot	any skater	jammer

**Cat
Ninetails**

**Val
Halla**

Jammer

Blocker-Pivot

**AGILE★
SMART** Flair
FAST **B**

FAST Flair
D

House Knives

House Knives

Galkyrie

**Hott
Rocketts**

Blocker-Pivot

Jammer

**AGILE★
SMART** Flair
D

MEAN★ Flair
D

Crushed Tomatoes

Crushed Tomatoes

Slambi

**Leggs
O'Lamb**

Pivot-Blocker

Blocker

**BIG★
SMART** Flair
G

**BIG★
POWERFUL** Flair
AGILE **G**

Dame Shames

Dame Shames

**Candi
Barr**

**Oriento
Flew**

Jammer

Pivot-Blocker

AGILE★ Flair
D

MEAN★ Flair
POWERFUL **D**

Gripe Jam

Gripe Jam