
This Girl Can: Women in Sport Profile

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What sport and fitness activity do you get involved in?

In pre-COVID-19 times, I played roller derby. Roller derby is a full contact sport played on roller skates by players skating around an elliptical track. It involves a fair bit of strategy and quick switches from offence to defence. Aside from practice a few times a week, I also went to the gym to make myself stronger and fitter to be able to play at the best level I can.

During COVID-19 I have been spending my time skating around parks, roller rinks, and in skate parks. As well as continuing to work on my off skates conditioning where I can.

If you want to know more about roller derby, check out Hell on Wheels on the BBC iPlayer.

What made you want to get involved in sport whilst working at University?

It was actually somebody at work that got me into roller derby, we were having a chat in the kitchen about weekend plans and she mentioned roller derby. I went along to an open session at a local league and that was it, I was hooked!

I had tried various sports as I was growing up, but nothing really stuck and I wasn't keen on just going to the gym. Roller derby is the perfect combination of fun, challenges, camaraderie and competitiveness.

I was looking for a way to meet some new people, maybe get a little exercise as my job is very much desk based and try something new and roller derby ticked all those boxes.

How do you feel sport and fitness activity helps you to look after your wellbeing?

Roller derby is crucial to my wellbeing, I can be having a bad day but as soon as I get to practice and put on a pair of skates anything that has been bothering me fades away.

It has been difficult during COVID-19 not being able to go to practice, but even a little skate around the park can do so much.

Because I want to compete at the highest level I can, this means I need to cross train, to help build up my strength and conditioning – this in turn helps me look after my wellbeing as I am stronger and less prone to injury.

It also encourages me to eat better which makes me healthier in the long run.

Plus, the endorphins are pretty cool too 😊

What advice do you have for any other females looking to get involved in sport or fitness activity?

Go for it! Starting a new sport or class is always going to be scary, especially if its something you haven't tried before – but nobody is going to be looking at you if/when you mess up – they are there to work on themselves too.

Women can play full contact sports too. Don't let anyone tell you otherwise.

Don't be scared of the free weights area of gyms!

You will make a great bunch of friends with like-minded interests.

Have any females in sport inspired you and if yes, how have they inspired you?

So, so many! So, a few roller derby teams that have inspired me are:

Rainy City Roller Derby, Manchester. They are the only team in the UK with their own venue. They are the number one ranked team in Europe. The level at which they train and compete is something which I aspire to.

Rose City Roller Derby, Portland, Oregon. The number one ranked team in the world. They toppled the previous four-time championship winners ending their run of over 60 wins in a row.

Victorian Roller Derby League, Melbourne, Australia. The only team outside of the USA to win the championship – an incredibly difficult thing to do given the few teams of their

calibre in the Pacific region. The game that won them the championship remains one of my favourites to watch!

2x4 (dos por cuatro) Roller Derby, Buenos Aires, Argentina. The first team from Latin America to qualify for the championship. They are an incredibly small but mighty team, and also always a thrill to watch.

There are a number of actual skaters that inspire me too (you'll have to bear with me as most of them have 'skate names' – pun based pseudonyms!): Loren Mutch (Red Bull sponsored athlete), Lorrage, Curly Håår, Lady Trample, Bomba Hache, Bicepsual, Gal of Fray, Lily Gaskel, Roxy Dallas, Blackman, Kristen Lee, to name a few! They inspire me to push myself and train hard.

Sky Brown – the youngest professional skateboarder in the world and likely to have qualified for the 2020 Summer Olympics. A fantastic achievement for someone so young and in the most part self-taught.

Katelyn Ohashi – a once Olympic gymnastics hopeful quit due to the injuries and criticism she sustained. She went onto study at UCLA and you might have seen her perfect 10 routine which went viral.

Surya Bonaly – a former competitive figure skater. She is the only Olympic figure skater to land a backflip on only one blade. There is a great episode about her in a series called 'Losers' on Netflix.

Erin Jackson – inline speed skater, roller derby player, plus ice speedskater. She qualified for the 2018 winter Olympics with just four months experience speed skating on ice.

Favourite personal sporting moment?

My favourite sporting moment that I have competed in was last year where I took part in the European Continental Cup in Helsinki, Finland. Eight teams from across Europe competed against each other in a bracket tournament over two days. It was an exceptional weekend. I played the best I have ever played and while we may not have won every game we learnt so much and took so much away from it.

Also I beat the travalator (90's Gladiators style) at a mud run once!