

# diversions

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"Barbie doesn't exist to a rollergirl," said Angie Bagley, aka Deviled Legs of the Carolina Roller Girls. "She's a bad idea."

The predominantly female sport of roller derby has boomed in popularity in the past several years, due in no small part to Raleigh's own Carolina Roller Girls.

"Our mission statement is focusing on helping women learn to play the sport and get the self-esteem element out of it as well," said Jessica Robinson, aka Lacy Lastkiss.

Some might remember roller derby from its televised incarnations decades ago that resembled professional wrestling more than organized sports by incorporating alter egos, flamboyant costumes and violent staged fights.

Today it is a legitimate league-organized sport. They kept the nicknames and costumes, but threw away the theatrics in favor of real athletic brutality.

The Carolina Rollergirls started its inaugural season in 2005 with two home teams and an all-star team pulled from those rosters for national competition. Now the league has three home teams

with a fourth in the works for next season, as well as an all-star B-team.

The ever-growing roster is comprised of a diverse collection of women from all walks of life, Robinson said, adding that this variety of backgrounds lets everyone to bring something unique to the table.

"It's interesting to see how you take people's notions of sports and how they bring in their experience," she said. "You have adults ranging from 21 to 46, and you have women that know marketing, graphic designers, accountants and students."

"All varieties of people come in, and everybody brings their expertise and knowledge to the sport."

This eclecticism also makes for one of the sport's main attractions.

"You go to a derby bout and you have all walks of life," Bagley said. "But I was drawn to it because I've always been drawn to the colorful sassy farts. I'm not one for khaki."

"You get your outside of the box thinkers and societal norm challengers, and these are the ones that try-out and are devoted fans. It's not exclusive, every realm is represented," she said.

The lack of social standards appeal to women interested in the sport — the game's emphasis is not about size and shape unlike many others sports, Bagley said.

"I think the underlying part of it is that women are powerful and can kick your ass and there are very few sports out there with the kind of physicality involved."

Providing a physical outlet and athletic venue for women is a major aspect of the sport.

"My thoughts are that women don't have a lot of outlets for this kind of sport," said Laura Slipsky, aka Pink Slip, marketing director for the Carolina Rollergirls.

"The other contact sports are very much dominated by men. And there are women who play those sports, and I think there's even some full contact women's football," she said. "But I think the time has come where women want to do something like that. We can play full contact and still be women."

Chad Johnson, aka Chad the Destroyer and coach of the "Trauma Queens," said that it's interesting to see this creative outlet for women on the rink.

"It's cool to see a mother of four just

#### ATTEND THE BOUT

Time: 6 p.m. Saturday  
Location: Dorton Arena,  
NC State Fairgrounds  
Info: carolinarollergirls.com

blast someone and be this brutal athlete and then just go back to being a mom," he said.

Bagley said her Rollergirl identity is liberating.

"I love to be (Deviled) Legs and you're not gonna see me as Legs anywhere else," she said. "You're not gonna see me in a mini-skirt anywhere else."

The dedication of both athletes and supporters will ensure the future of the sport said Slipsky.

"For me, roller derby has been a really rewarding experience."

"Once I got into it and saw the people involved, I couldn't help but feel the same way. I'm really excited to see how it's grown, and I know it's gonna stick around for a while."

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**CONCERT PHOTOS** Vicarious experiences of last week's shows with reviews, too. This week, check the blog for more pictures from the Barack the Cradle event.

**DIVEBLOG** Stay tuned to the blog for super-radical updates (almost) every day.



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