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HOME >> NEWS INDEX >> Sports

Roller derby girls set to deliver Enemies on the rink; sisterhood off the rink

By Jimmy Currier
Las Cruces Bulletin

When Lisa Landreth and her friends Katie Woodard and Ami Montoya strap on their helmets, pads and roller skates Sunday, May 22, they will transform into Barbie Bombshell, Geura Beef and Hearnio Evil. The girls will compete for roller derby glory at Dickerson's Barn, 3920 W. Picacho Ave.

The bout starts at 6 p.m., and after months of practice and planning, they're ready for action.

Landreth will be the primary jammer for the Spitfire Sallies. Her job is to get past the Reguladies Derby's blockers, while Montoya, better known as "Hear no Evil", is the first line of defense.

"My assignment is to go after this one," she said. "I'm the first line of defense and I try to prevent her from reaching the pack. Sometimes, I'm successful and sometimes not."

So, how does the match work? Each team has a jammer and four blockers. The jammer's role is to skate past the opposing team's skaters, picking up a point for each one passed. Both teams have jammers skating around the rink at the same time. The jam lasts for two minutes and the bout is two 30-minute halves.

If you think this is a new sport, think again. Women's flat track roller derby has been around since the Great Depression. In 1935, Leo Seltzer held The Transcontinental Roller Derby in Chicago, where more than 20 teams skated 57,000 laps around a rink - the equivalent of 3,000 miles - making roller-skating a popular sport. A few years later, the sport became more physical and the fan support really picked up.

In the 1970s, roller derby began to be more sports-entertainment than actual sport, with staged hits, fighting and predetermined winners. Now, all the hits are real, there's rules against fighting and the winner of the bout is the team that scores the most points in a very physical, full-contact sport.

"This gets very physical," Landreth said. "Girls come out with bruises and big contusions. It's competitive and aggressive."

Landreth, Woodard and Montoya compete in the Crossroads City Derby, along with 37 other women. The league has three home teams - Sallies, Derby and Rinkrash Revolutionaries - and a travel team - the Sucias. The Sucias compete against other travel teams in San Antonio, El Paso

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In addition to skating and practicing, the women run the league. That means weekly meetings, dues and planning events.


"I've always said this group of girls would never hang out as friends individually but this is something that has brought us all together and made us all sisters in a huge family," Montoya said. "Our husbands hang out together and our kids have all become friends. This is a huge family." So, while the girls look mean on the rink, off the rink they're full of sugar, spice and everything nice.

On May 14, CCD held a car wash for a little boy who was severely burned and had high medical bills. They also helped out a fellow skater who broke her arm and was unable to work with a Derby Doll for a Day event. "We're in the process of establishing ourselves as a nonprofit organization and we wanted to really provide a sense of empowerment for women in the community," Montoya said. "We're wanting to promote the positiveness of the sport."

In addition to the Spitfire Sallies and Reguladies Derby going at it, their junior league, which features girls from ages 4 to 20, will scrimmage at half time.


If you like what you see and want to be a part of the action, CCD is looking for new members or as they call the, "Fresh Meat." On Monday, May 23, there will be an orientation at Dickerson's Barn from 7 to 9 p.m.

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