

008 SPORTS

# Acadiana Roller Derby

## MORE THAN WOMEN IN FISHNETS

BY AGENT ERIN HOLDEN

Roller derby is rising in popularity worldwide, and the Acadiana Roller Derby team has certainly brought in its share of fans. They are so successful that they decided to move from Acadiana Top Shelf Sports in Youngsville to Blackham Coliseum.

Katie Slattery (also known as Ovary Actor in the derby world) explained the move and other rebranding choices that the group has made recently. "Our fan base has grown, and we wanted to be in the center of the community. Blackham is perfect for that."

What do people enjoy most about watching a roller derby bout? Each match involves jammers roller skating past their opponents. Those opponents will do whatever regulations allow to try to take them down. This involves a lot of spills, which can be the biggest crowd-pleaser.

Slattery recalled when she first began



training for the team. The 12-week training period for new team members is called "Fresh Meat." "I was very nervous at first," she said. "One of the first things they teach you is how to fall. You have knee pads, elbow pads, and pads on your wrists. You learn to let those areas take the impact and fall on your knees. I found out that it wasn't bad to fall...I thought I would be embarrassed, but everyone falls."

Slattery's perception of what roller derby is all about has changed since she got involved. Like many people, she said she "used to think of it as a bunch of angry women getting out their aggression."

Acadiana Roller Girls changed its name to Acadiana Roller Derby to make it clear that men can also get involved. They also created a new logo that incorporates two great egrets, symbolizing self-reliance and balance as well as the Acadiana region. Slattery said that the logo "used to be a woman in fishnet stockings. That was a trend for a lot of teams to say, 'Look - women playing roller derby.' Now people know the sport. They are even talking about it being in the Olympics."

ARD now has an ASL interpreter at each bout, an addition they feel is very important to the deaf community in the Acadiana area. Find the schedule at [acadianarollergirls.com](http://acadianarollergirls.com).