



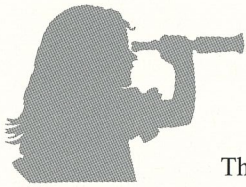
July 2004
Issue No. 90

Overview

Historical
Roller Skating

National Museum
of Roller Skating





Curator's Column

By Deborah L. Wallis,
Director and Curator

The cover photo on this issue is the 1907 San Francisco roller polo team – Notice the rubber piece under the toe of the skates. It was added to the skates to stop the ball from getting under the wheels of the skate.

In 2002, the museum lent a few of our artifacts to the Experience Music Project (EMP) in Seattle, Washington for the exhibit *Disco: A Decade of Saturday Nights*. The response was so great to the Disco exhibit that EMP turned it into a traveling exhibit. The first stop on the exhibit's whirlwind tour is the Henry Ford Museum in Dearborn, Michigan. The exhibit will be at the museum from June 15, 2004 to September 15, 2004. The exhibit's second stop will be at the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts at Lincoln Center from November 2004 to April 2005.

In June, the museum was featured in the magazine *Sports Illustrated* for their Nebraska issue. The museum was featured as one of the sport sites in the state.

This summer the museum will have extended hours on Saturdays July 24, 31 and August 7 from 12pm to 4pm. We will also be highlighting the museum on Saturday July 24 with hands on activities for families to do in the museum. Stop by your museum this summer to be a part of the excitement.

Thank you for your continued support of the museum.

MEMORIALS

The Patron Memorial Plaque was created to honor those individuals who have contributed to the growth of roller skating as a sport, recreation or business. A plaque may be purchased for a minimum contribution of \$250. Please fill out the information below if you are interested. All other donations are recognized in the newsletter.

In Memory of In Honor of On Occasion of

Name _____

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Please check one:

\$25 \$50 \$100 \$250 Other \$ _____

This contribution was made by:

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Mail this form & payment (NMRS) to the museum.
All donations are tax-deductible.

More than twenty years of support from many individuals and companies are behind the National Museum of Roller Skating. The lives of grandparents, parents, daughters, sons and friends are celebrated in the museum in both quiet ways and lasting ways. When you make a gift to the museum, you and those you love are taking part in a vital tradition of generosity that will provide the sustaining support for the museum. Contributing to the museum would be giving back to the sport and business that has treated you so well and will help to preserve the life long work of so many individuals, including yourself, that have competed in or work in the roller skating community. It is a living testimony to your life's work and would bring appreciation and recognition for you and your business. Please consider including the museum in your Will, Living Trust, Gift of Property or to name the museum as beneficiary of an insurance policy or IRA.

National Museum of Roller Skating
4730 South Street Suite 2
Lincoln, NE 68506
Phone: 402/483-7551 x16
Fax: 402/483-1465
www.rollerskatingmuseum.com
postmaster@rollerskatingmuseum.com

Museum Hours

9 am to 5 pm, Monday - Friday
Closed holidays and weekends.

Mission Statement: Roller skating is a shared experience of many generations of Americans as a recreation, sport and commercial enterprise. The National Museum of Roller Skating is committed to enriching the experience of roller skaters by increasing their understanding and appreciation of its rich history and accomplishments, to extending public knowledge of these past events and by preserving this legacy for future generations.

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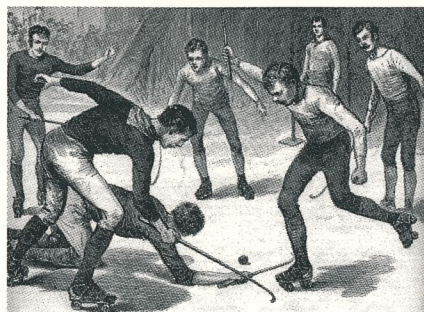
FEATURE ARTICLE

Hardball History

by Deborah L. Wallis

Hardball hockey can trace its roots to the game of roller polo. The game of polo was transferred to roller skates and the first roller polo game was played in 1878 at the Denmark Rink in London, England. In the US, the first roller polo league was formed in 1882 in Dayton, Ohio with teams in seven cities. A larger league was formed with the Massachusetts Roller Polo League. They had teams in fourteen cities with official rules and employed officials. The league made up the teams' schedules and even invented a patented polo cage.

The game of roller polo consisted of teams made up of five players in the positions of center, halfback, quarterback and two



September 8, 1883 Harpers Weekly cover with an image of a roller polo game played at Newport, Rhode Island.

rushers playing with short curved sticks called canes and a baseball size ball with a cord center and hard rubber cover. The rushers were the main offensive players and the stars of the game much like the quarterback in the game of football. However, roller polo was much rougher

than football as the referees allowed physical contact but the players could not hold an opponent or touch the ball.

By 1886 roll polo was considered by many to be one of the "best-governed and the most scientific game in the world of sports." The National League of Roller Polo was formed in 1886 with over 100 members making it the strongest sports organization at the time in the US. But after this first burst of interest in the game, roller polo competition declined in the US. However, roller polo games could be seen being played in urban city streets or any large paved area.

In the early 1900s, the game of hockey played on roller skates began to gain interest of skaters in the US including the use of a puck and an ice hockey stick but roller hockey using canes and balls was still very popular in Europe in the 1920s and 1930s. In 1924 the first European roller hockey championship was held. In 1936 the Federation Internationale de Patinage a Roulettes (FIRS) held a world hockey and speed championship. Many countries were invited but only European countries participated. The official hockey equipment used was the curved stick and ball. But due to US skaters' preference for ice hockey sticks and pucks, the US did not take part in the championship.

Shortly after the Roller Skating Rink Operators Association (RSROA) formed in 1937, they began to organize roller sports including roller hockey. In 1940 they drafted and published a set

of roller hockey rules to grow interest in the game. However, the organized game did not receive full recognition until 1959. An increased interest in the sport was noticed by the RSROA and they selected a committee of four to formulate a proposal and rules for the game. In 1959 the American RSROA Roller Hockey Association (ARRHA) was formed with Joe Spillman as Commissioner. The ARRHA drafted roller hockey rules that were tentatively adopted by the RSROA. With Spillman's direction, the sport grew rapidly.

During the 1960 National Championships held in Little Rock, Arkansas, exhibition games of ball and puck roller hockey were held. Following the Nationals, the first competitive season of roller hockey

officially began in 1961. State and Regional competitions determined the teams that would move onto the National Championships. The official equipment selected for the games was the ball and curved stick.



1961 National Hardball Hockey Champions the Roller Ghosts of Lubbock, Texas

The final 1961 National Hockey Championship game was held on the opening night of the North American National Championships for Figure and Speed. Arlis Snyder remarked in the 1961 Championship issue of *Skate*, "Hockey for the first time is an event in the American Championship – a thrilling final game, which saw the winner come from behind to be victorious in sudden death overtime. An excellent beginning for a new event. We liked it and we think the audience did, too."

Following the 1961 Nationals, the RSROA board decided to adopt ball hockey as the official roller hockey sport of the organization. Ball hockey was chosen as the majority of clubs at the time were playing this version of the game. Another factor in the choice was ball hockey being the hockey game of choice at the international level. On September 1, 1965, puck hockey made a rebound back into the RSROA. During their semi-annual board meeting, they reinstated puck hockey as an equal separate division of roller hockey.

From 1961-1966 roller hockey grew. After five years of National competition, there were 111 hockey clubs formed, 568 registered players and 93 commissioned officials. After a twenty-five year absence, the RSROA returned to FIRS and was ready for international competition. In 1966 an eight-man team was selected for the World Hockey Tournament in Sao Paulo, Brazil. The team members were: Bill Sisson (player/coach), Dickie Sisson, Edwin Sisson, Lyndol Hall, Johnny "Preacher" Black, Dickie Thibodeaux and Roy Huckaby with Ted Bielicki as head coach and Bill Sisson as team captain. Due to some slight

differences in international rules and the skating surface, the US team only won two out of the eight games they played. But the games were competitive and the US gained the respect of the international community.

On the national level in 1971, the National Hockey Championships were separated from championships for Figure and Speed and in 1977 the national hockey championships were further divided into separate national championships for puck and ball hockey.



1992 Olympic Team

In 1992 hardball hockey was chosen as a demonstration sport in the 1992 summer Olympics in Barcelona, Spain. The US team qualified for the meet along with eleven other countries including: Portugal, Holland, Argentina, Brazil, Italy, Spain, Germany, Switzerland, Angola, Australia and Japan. Head coach Dickie Sisson and assistant coach Ruben Leni picked a team of ten players and two alternates: Mike Stevenson (forward), Dickie Chado (forward and team captain), Brady Donoghue (guard), Jeff Gibson (forward), Keith Huckaby (forward), Karl Huckaby (guard), Johnny Raglin (forward), Jimmy Trussell (forward), Plim Howard (goalie), David Jones (goalie), Frankie Lee (1st alternate) and Brian Moyer (2nd alternate). Sisson and Leni worked the team hard and had high hopes of coming home with a medal but Italy and Portugal prevented that from happening.

Even with sold out games, the Olympic Committee chose not to give full recognition to the sport of hardball hockey. As a consequence, after our moment in the spotlight roller hockey and roller skating is still trying to receive full Olympic status.

The US has continued to field world hockey teams and has maintained a presence on the world scene. And this most unique sport of hockey continues over a hundred years after its first game.



Inside the Object Files

by Emily Nimsakont, Assistant Curator



One of the largest sections of the museum's textile collection is the portion that is made up of skating costumes and uniforms. Our costumes include competitive figure skating costumes, as well as costumes from vaudeville performers and those worn by Gloria Nord, the star of the Skating Vanities. The uniforms represent a wide variety of roller sports. We have speed skating uniforms, roller hockey jerseys, and even shirts that were worn to play roller basketball. These costumes and uniforms cover a wide time span. They range from vaudeville costumes from the early 1900s to World Team hockey uniforms that were used as recently as 2002.

These costumes and uniforms are useful to us in a variety of ways. One of their main uses is in exhibits. In addition, these costumes and uniforms are useful to us from a research standpoint because they document the changes that have taken place in these items of clothing over the years. For example, the comparison of a bulky speed skating uniform from the 1920s with a spandex uniform from the 1990s can tell us a great deal about the changes in technology that have taken place because of a greater understanding of aerodynamics.

The costumes and uniforms in our textile collection are very important to the preservation of roller skating history. They represent the wide variety of activities that have been done on roller skates, and they help us learn about the changes in these activities that have taken place over time. We always enjoy receiving new costumes and uniforms that help us expand our collection.

Recent Donations

Daily Bread Magazine, Escondido, California, *Daily Bread t-shirt*

Dave Fleming, Northridge, California, *programs*

Chester Fried, South River, New Jersey, *skating memorabilia*

Richard Hawkins, Lincoln, Nebraska, *magazines and mug*

John Parker, Covina, California, *Roller Derby programs, leather jacket and Native American headdress worn by donor during Roller Derby exhibitions*

George Pickard, Lincoln Nebraska, *speed skating patches and Spain's national roller skating federation banner*

Charles Skilling, Garden City, Kansas, *Lite-Wate toe stop*

Megan Smolenyak, Williamsburg, Virginia, *Photograph and associated archival material*

Randy Talbot, Grand Junction, Colorado, *booklets, magazines, programs and memorabilia from his rink, Verducci Racing*

poster, a pair of Zero skates
Al and Karen Thompson, Phoenix, Arizona, *Rollero Rink memorabilia and USA Skateland flier*

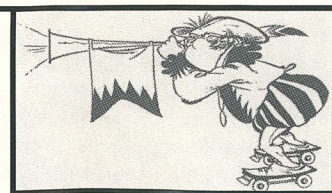
Joseph Wagner, Algonquin, Illinois, *program from The Hub rink in Chicago, Illinois*

Deborah Wallis, Lincoln, Nebraska, *Roller Skating Association 2004 items and USA Roller Sports shirts*

Barbara Wulff, Omaha, Nebraska, *pair of skates with Micro Star plates with associated equipment*

Peggy Young, Lincoln, Nebraska, *USA Roller Sports championship lapel pins*

Elaine Zitel Minch, Euclid, Ohio, *programs, stickers, archival material and memorabilia from The Rollerdrome in Euclid, Ohio*



Featured Exhibit

The History of Hockey on Wheels

Roller Polo

Roller hockey began as a game called roller polo. The game of polo was introduced in America in the 1870s, and it became so popular that people began to copy it on skates. The game is played with short, curved sticks known as canes, and the ball is made of a cord center with a hard rubber cover.

In the 1880s, many roller polo leagues were formed throughout the country. In 1886, the National League of Roller Polo was established, and the official rules of play were adopted. However, after this initial burst of popularity, interest in roller polo, or roller hockey, as it was now beginning to be called, declined in America.



Roller Hockey in Europe

In the 1920s and 1930s, roller hockey, using canes and balls, became very popular in Europe. Beginning in 1924, European championships were held. In 1936, the first world championships for roller hockey were held. Although countries from all over the world were invited, only European countries attended. The United States team was invited to play, but the team

members declined, since they preferred to use ice hockey sticks and pucks.

Roller Hockey in America

The Roller Skating Rink Operators Association (RSROA) published a draft of roller hockey rules in 1940. However, roller hockey competition did not really become serious in America until the late 1950s. In 1959, the RSROA authorized the formation of the American Roller Hockey Association, and in 1960, exhibition games of both puck and ball hockey were held at the national championships. Roller hockey officially became a part of the national championships in 1961, with curved sticks and balls as the official equipment. The first national title was won by the Rolling Ghosts of Lubbock, Texas.

After the 1961 Nationals, the RSROA adopted ball hockey as the official form of the sport because it was played by the majority of clubs in America, and because it was played at the international level. However, in 1965, puck hockey was reinstated as a separate division. In 1971, the hockey national championships

were separated from the artistic and speed skating championships. In 1977, the puck hockey championships were separated from the ball hockey championships. Also in 1977, women's roller hockey made its debut at the national championships.

The United States in International Competition

During the 1960s, the United States returned to international competition. In 1966, America was ready to field a competitive team for the World Hockey Tournament in Sao Paulo, Brazil. The team faced the challenge of adjusting to international rules, instead of American rules. Most of the rule differences involved the goalie, who could not wear a chest protector, had to serve his own penalty time, and could face a penalty shot. The American team finished the tournament with a record of two wins and six losses, but they played competitively and won the respect of the international hockey community.

Roller Hockey Today

In the United States today, three types of roller hockey are played: puck, North American ball, and hardball. Although there are differences between these varieties, they also share some similarities. They all involve five-player teams, consisting of two forwards, two defensemen, and one goalie. In addition, they are all non-contact sports that require teamwork and strategy.

Puck Roller Hockey

Puck roller hockey is very similar to ice hockey. Players use regulation ice hockey equipment, such as goals, sticks, padding, and helmets. The game is played with iceless pucks, which are similar to ice pucks, except that they have raised bumps on their surfaces. These bumps reduce the friction between the puck and the playing surface and allow the puck to slide more easily.

North American Ball Roller Hockey

North American ball roller hockey uses the same protective gear as puck hockey. In this form of roller hockey, instead of a puck, players use a plastic ball. This ball is filled with liquid, which prevents the ball from bouncing. This allows the players to have greater control of the ball.

Hardball Roller Hockey

Of the three types of roller hockey, hardball is the most similar to roller polo. It is played with a hard cork and rubber ball. Players use short, curved canes instead of ice hockey sticks. Since the ball can travel faster than 80 miles per hour, players wear padding, helmets, and reinforced skates.

Hardball roller hockey was an



exhibition sport at the 1992 Summer Olympics in Barcelona, Spain. However, it has not been made an official Olympic sport.

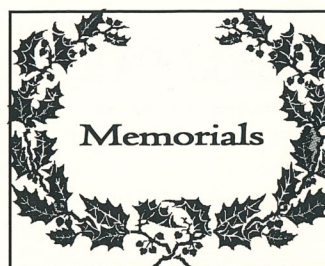
Women in Roller Hockey

Women have been playing amateur roller hockey officially since 1977, when women's hockey was added to the national championships. Women began to compete in both puck and ball hockey.

In 1994, USA Hockey Inline was formed, as a subsection of USA Hockey, the governing body for ice hockey in America. Women's teams were involved in USA Hockey Inline from the beginning, with 1,603 women registered for the first season.

A few women have also played for men's professional roller hockey teams. Roller Hockey International (RHI) was a professional roller hockey league that existed from 1993 to 1999. Three women, all goalies, played for the league: Manon Rheaume for the New Jersey Rockin' Rollers, Erin Witten for the Oakland Skates, and Kelly Dyer for the Orlando Roller Gators.

In 2002, the first women's world inline hockey championships were held in Rochester, New York. The Canadian team won the title, and the United States finished in second place.



Memorials have been received in honor of: For Norman Greenwald

from
the South Central USA Roller Sports Region
Bob and Annelle Anderson and family
Nellie Lillie
Harry Walker

2004 Raffle Roundup

The National Museum of Roller Skating's 2004 raffle was a success. The raffle drawing took place during the Gala Celebration Reception at the Roller Skating Association-International's annual convention on May 12. Five lucky ladies, Michelle Fellner, Mrs. Sonny Genier, Angela Hardridge, Stephanie Hardridge and JoAnne Honeger, drew the twenty-four prize winning tickets from the raffle drum and eleven of the winners were present at the dinner to pick up their cash prizes. Dale Hanson won the \$1,000 prize and an ecstatic Linda Baker won the \$5,000 grand prize. Nellie Lillie, museum board member, sold the most tickets and was awarded the Robert Bollinger Ticket Seller Award.



2004 raffle grand prize winner Linda Baker with (from left to right) Deborah Wallis, museum director and curator; Frank Cernik, board member; Dave Schafer, board member; and Annelle Anderson, board president.

The \$100 winners were: Don and Susan Perkins, RSA Section #8, Gracie D. Wagner, Summit Bank, Mitch Kuc, Gladys Kelly, Teresa DiMattina, Mrs. M. Burgermeister, Harry Walker, Terri Ingram, Budd Van Roekel (2 \$100 winning tickets), Richard Jones, Jim Hafner and Rodney Fink. The \$250 winners were Florence Schuneman, Janet Hardridge, Douglas Ingles and Kim & Mark Majoros. The \$500 winners were Pete Van Ornum, Peg & Bob Fortman and RSA Section #4. Summit Bank, Gladys Kelly, Teresa DiMattina, Budd Van Roekel and Janet Hardridge generously donated their winnings to the museum and Dale Hanson gave \$100 of his winnings to the museum for a museum membership for his wife Patti and himself.

Thanks to the dedicated support of thirty-three individuals, the museum surpassed our goal of selling a total of 500 tickets. The museum would like to express our sincere appreciation the following individuals for supporting the museum by selling raffle tickets: Annelle Anderson, Cindy Anderson, Bert Anselmi, Kevin Baker, Bob Bollinger, Dan Brown, Ed Caldwell, Frank Cernik, Phyllis Cernik, Joe Champa, John Chrien, Marvin Facher, Chester Fried, Sonny Grenier, Bill Hoefler, William Kelly, Kimberly Kissle, Lynnell Knight, Nellie Lillie, Betty Lynn, Mills Lynn, Chris Markgraf, Bill McDonald, Larry Owens, George Pickard, Dave Schafer, Ingird Thorson, Deborah Torries, Frank Torries, Budd Van Roekel, Douglas Warren, Grayson White and Ed Young.

The museum's raffle would not have taken place without the generosity of all the individuals who brought tickets. On behalf of the museum's board of trustees, thank you to the entire 2004 raffle ticket buyers. We greatly appreciate your support and we extend to you our sincere gratitude.

Membership

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**Also made an additional cash donation.*



The National Museum of Roller Skating would like to thank our new museum members that have joined since our last issue. Thank you for your support!

Plimon Howard

The National Museum of Roller Skating symbolizes the generosity and commitment of our members. It is the support of our members that sustain the museum and without our members the museum would not exist. We are indebted to them. We are pleased to recognize in this issue our Individual/Family level members for their interest and philanthropy.

To Become a member of the National Museum of Roller Skating Join Here!

Membership Levels: New Renewal Gift
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 Donor \$50 Individual/Family \$35

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Contributions in addition to membership increase your support of the museum's activities.

Membership includes a subscription to the member's newsletter, Historical Roller Skating Overview, 10% off museum store items, a membership card, and your choice of publications (please check one):

- The History of Roller Skating* ©1997 ISBN 0-9658192-0-5
- The Allure of the Rink* ©1999 ISBN 0-9658192-1-3

Benefits extend one year from join date. Please allow 3 weeks for processing.

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 or call the museum at 402/483-7551 x16

All donations are tax-deductible up to the amount permitted by law.



Just For Fun

Can you complete this word scramble? Try to unscramble the 20 words from the articles on roller hockey. If you need some help, the answers are listed below the puzzle.

Word Scramble

- 1. ukpc _____
- 2. citks _____
- 3. nimofur _____
- 4. aelgoi _____
- 5. surreh _____
- 6. rudag _____
- 7. sanec _____
- 8. rabhdlla _____
- 9. rowrdaf _____
- 10. netcre _____

- 11. gonlirl shotsg _____
- 12. tamerua _____
- 13. nedefemsne _____
- 14. tocnatucnno _____
- 15. taypanl _____
- 16. lorler oolp _____
- 17. dqau _____
- 18. ennlia _____
- 19. eerfree _____
- 20. mopliscy _____

16. roller polo
17. quad
18. inline
19. referee
20. Olympics

11. rolling ghosts
12. amateur
13. defensemen
14. non contact
15. penalty

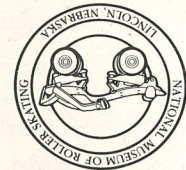
6. guard
7. canes
8. hardball
9. forward
10. center

1. puck
2. stick
3. uniform
4. goalie
5. rusher

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