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FEATURED SKATER OF THE MONTH - VON SLEAZE #7

Posted in [News](#), [Roller Derby](#), on 3rd July 2015

You will find this month's featured skater on the other side of the track in stripes. It goes without saying that Roller Derby would be nothing without the Referee's and NSO's that make it happen so it is great to hear from one of our Zebra friends

Skate Name & Number:

Von Sleaze, 737 is my official [WFTDA](#) referee number, but I still sometimes go by my old skate number of 7.

Years Skating:

About 8. I used to try to skate as a kid but was never any good at it. I took it up properly as an adult.

Years Involved in Roller Derby:

I started in September 2007 when I started up [Middlesbrough Milk Rollers](#) with Germaine Leer. I was their Captain for a few years. Then I moved to Newcastle. I joined the [Newcastle Roller Girls](#) and was their Vice Captain for a few more years. I then decided to switch to refereeing and eventually moved to Birmingham where I joined [Central City Roller Girls](#). Two years later I am now the Head Referee for [Team England Men's Roller Derby](#)

When did you get involved in Roller Derby:

See above :)

Can you remember the first game you watched?

Yes. Germaine Leer asked me to go on a roadtrip with her to Birmingham to watch a game when we first considered starting a league up. I had no idea what was happening but really wanted to have a go at it.

What League/s are you currently part of:

[Crash Test Brummies](#), [South Wales Silures](#) and [Team England](#).

How did you come to choose your derby name?

Germaine Leer chose it for me! We booked in to go to Rollercon so we could find out more about the sport. This was in 2008 after we had managed to get fewer than ten women interested in joining the team. We had to pick names for our passes so did it on the spot. My name was Rita Von Sleaze.

How would you describe your skating style?

I have been told I look graceful. I personally feel I'm all arms and legs.

Tell us about your kit- what is your current set up?

I have Antik skates, they're beautiful. The (Venus) plate is pink to match the design. I use TSG knees, atom elbows and wrists and a glittery helmet. I am not really into kit - as long as it fits and works I'm happy.

What is on your 'most wanted' kit list at the moment?

I'm into compression clothing at the moment - my biggest "want" right now is compression pants that are all black and high waisted.

How do you prepare for a bout?

I re read the rules if I have time - if not I read the ones specific to the position I will be reffing in. I like to have all my kit ready to go - I used to clean all my wheels and bearings but I'm too lazy to do that these days.

I adjust my gym regime and diet if I have a big event or a tournament coming up. That helps me to feel like I'm prepared.

What kind of off skates training do you do?

I am lucky - my gym is between my house and my work. Close enough to go on a lunchbreak too. I usually get to the gym about four times a week, but that increases when I am preparing for an event. I don't spend hours at the gym - I prefer to work hard for half an hour and then leave. I enjoy weight training and spin classes - and occasionally force myself to run.

Has Roller Derby changed your life?

I used to be really overweight. Being the Captain of a team meant I had to get in shape. Once I got in shape - I wanted to stay in shape. I'm not sure if I would have felt that drive without roller derby.

It has also introduced me to some of the best people in my life, including my fiancé.

What is your proudest roller derby moment?

Refereeing the Men's World Cup. Although I have refereeing the Women's World Cup which was a larger event and more of an accolade... the Men's WC was so emotional for me. I trained hard for it, witnessed some brilliant skating by people I know and admire, and at the end I cried with my friends - tears of pride and achievement. It was a brilliant tournament.

Who are your derby heroes?

Anyone who tries to further officiating within their league. It's a difficult task to take on and I am always in awe of the passion I come across.

Do you have any upcoming bouts that you're really excited for and why?

4Nations. I am a THR for the event which will see the national teams for France, Scotland, England and Wales battle it out.

Other than playing are there any other ways that you involve yourself in Roller Derby?

I coach a lot of referee crews and mentor a few referees. I have developed a training plan for referees and blog about being a female official in a predominantly male section of the sport. I have tried just about every role in roller derby, but officiating and teaching take up my time now.

What are your thoughts on Roller Derby as a sport "past, present, future"?

Past: God that was fun. I'm glad I did it.

Present: This sport is crazy, why on Earth do you lot do it?

Future: I imagine we'll be on hover-skates by then. I look forward to it.

Is Roller Derby the only form of skating you do? If no what else do you do on skates.

I sometimes go to the roller disco, and have toyed with the idea of artistic skating classes... but I haven't taken any yet.

Any goals for the future?

To referee the [Men's World Cup 2016](#), to mentor more new referees, to present my referee training plan at more leagues in the UK and watch officials grow as they learn.

Anything else you would like to share?

Be nice to your officials. They're all learning too. Don't berate them when they get calls wrong - if skaters didn't get things wrong, we wouldn't have to be there at all. So bear that in mind and be kind.

Read my blog for more: <http://www.sleazethezebra.com/>

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