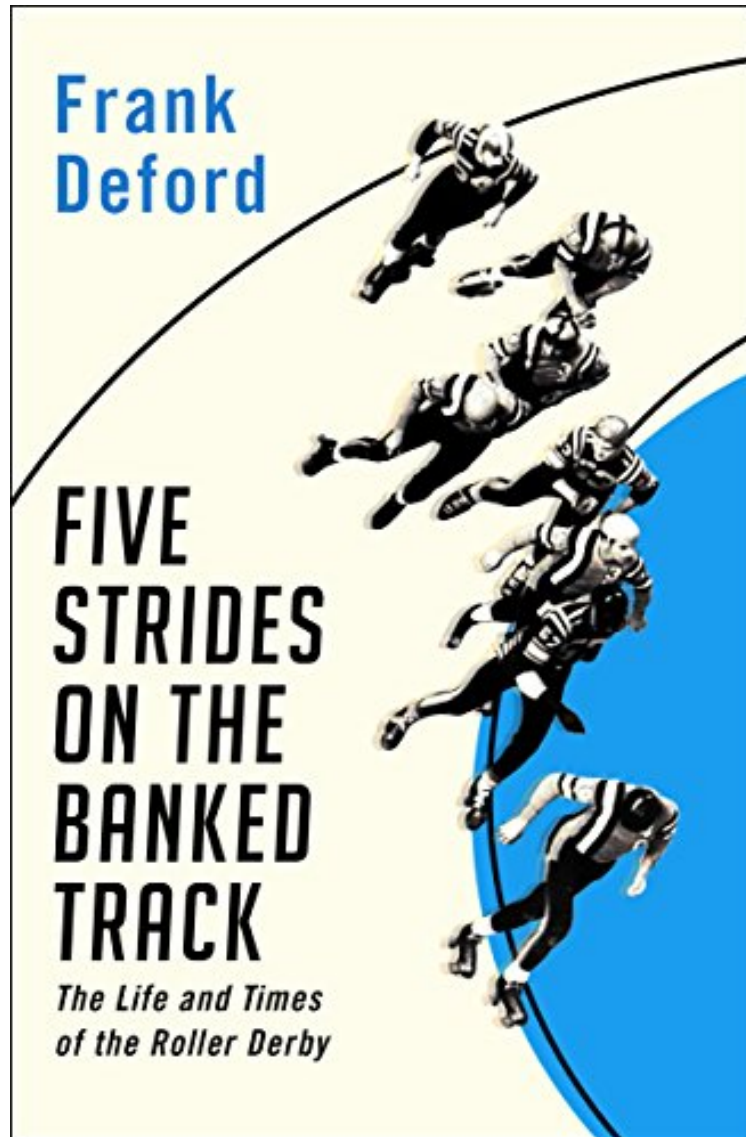


Five Strides on the Banked Track: The Life and Times of the Roller Derby

Frank Deford

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Frank Deford : Five Strides on the Banked Track: The Life and Times of the Roller Derby before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Five Strides on the Banked Track: The Life and Times of the Roller Derby:

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Illustrated with photographs by Walter Iooss Jr.: Iconic sportswriter and commentator Frank Deford's first book brings to life one of America's most thrilling and misunderstood sports entertainments, the Roller Derby, from its birth during the Great Depression to its second ascendancy in the late 1960s. In *Five Strides on the Banked Track*, distinguished sports journalist Frank Deford opens a fascinating window on this exhilarating entertainment that operates according to its own set of unique rules—both on and off the track. The Derby began as an idea on a tablecloth in 1935 by Leo Seltzer. From its Great Depression roots—when young skaters would run away to join the Roller Derby in the same way one might run away to join the circus—through its prewar heyday, postwar decline, and ultimate rise to superstardom in the 1960s, Deford sweeps us along on an unforgettable journey. He brings together the players, the fans, the promoters, and the celebrities. He shares the exploits of Bay Bomber legend Charlie Orsquo;Connell, superstar Joanie Weston, and beloved villain Ann Calvello, with her dyed blue hair, who would ultimately go on to compete in Roller Derby in seven separate decades. Deford vividly captures the excitement of a sport Variety called "cathartic, dramatic, fast-paced, and classic as a John Wayne movie." From the idolatry of the fans to the loneliness of the open road to the hard-charging frenzy of the arena, this is a rare glimpse into a uniquely American spectator sport that continues to reinvent and resurrect itself today. This definitive new edition includes a foreword by Jerry Seltzer and an introduction by Frank Deford.

"The Roller Derby is the panacea of the proletariat, the great Un-sport, a smash-and-crash arena of spills where the most triumphant moment means watching good broad Joanie Weston bump bad broad Ann Calvello hard enough in the boobs to drive her over the rail. Mr. Deford presents a lively picture of all this but the real story should lie in the hands of the sociologists and analysts, an interesting study of America the Violent in *Five Strides*." —Kirkus
Before roller derby was a grassroots sport played by tens of thousands of people around the world, it was a touring sports entertainment that thrilled a nation for decades. Five Strides on the Banked Track is a fascinating, endearingly written look behind the curtain of this family of skaters who made a success of this exciting spectacle. —Jonathann R., New York Shock Exchange
In 1968 Sports Illustrated's Most Valuable Writer hit the road—with Charlie Orsquo;Connell, Joan Weston and the other stars of the one and only Roller Derby. Frank Deford's delightful and poignant *Five Strides on the Banked Track* covers the Derby from its early days to its 1970 zenith, the first book on the game, cherished by Derby fans everywhere, and deservedly so. —Keith Copping, author of *Roller Derby to RollerJam: The Authorized Story of an Unauthorized Sport*