

Central Park Dance Skating

Roller skating is the traveling on surfaces with roller skates. It is a form of recreational activity as well as a sport, and can also be a form of transportation. Skates generally come in two basic varieties: **quad roller skates** and **inline skates**. In America, this hobby was most popular, first between 1935 and the early 1960s and then again in the 1990s when in-line outdoor roller skating became popular.

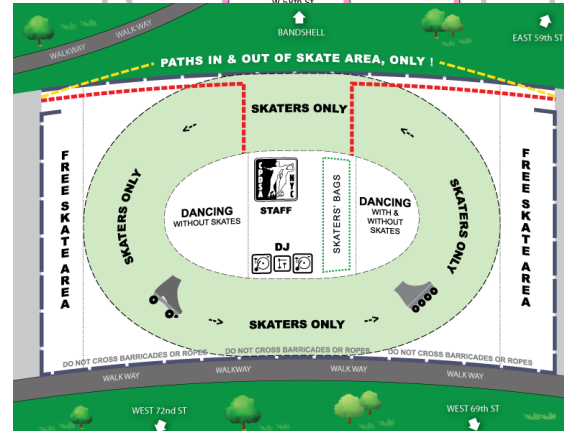
Roller dancing is a style of physical movement, usually done to music, that isn't choreographed or planned ahead of time. It occurs in many genres, including those where people dance with partners. By definition, this kind of dance is never the same from performance to performance, although it can be done formally and informally, sometimes using some sparse choreography as a very loose outline for the improvisation.



Location



Supplies Needed



Central Park Dance Skating: A Brief History

The current generation of roller skating on the Dead Road began in around 1978 when a roller skate rental business called “Good Skates” started to operate at the Mineral Springs facility just west of the Dead Road. Roller skating was very popular at that time and soon that whole area of the park was teeming with skaters. A number of skaters painted guide lines on the pavement in the form of two concentric circles. Skating became a regular part of the fabric of that area of Central Park.

In 1994, when the north end of the Dead Road was repaved as part of the Bethesda Fountain and Bandshell restorations, skaters learned about a map being produced by the Parks Department that showed Volleyball courts covering the whole area. A few skaters produced a petition demanding a voice in how the area was going to be used. Six hundred skaters and concerned citizens signed this petition and a loosely organized Ad Hoc committee met with Parks Department officials in a dialogue designed to find an accommodation for the skating community. An agreement was reached and the skaters began a cooperative effort to work with the Parks Department. This agreement lasted as long as the Dinkins Administration stayed in office.

In April of 1995, the newly elected Guiliani Administration reneged on the agreement and began to wage a campaign to chase the skaters out of the park. The new Administration was able to change the municipal code governing the number of people who could assemble freely without a special-event permit, reducing the number from fifty to fifteen people. The Administration was also able to push through a requirement that anyone using an amplified sound device had to have a special-event permit from the Parks Department and an amplified sound permit for that device from the police.

Faced with the prospect of being thrown out of the Park, a group of skaters formed the *Central Park Dance Skaters Association* (CPDSA) and went to work organizing the skaters, consulting with lawyers and informing the media about this abridgment of their rights. Over the following three months, the Central Park Dance Skaters Association waged a campaign to win back their rights to skate to music in the park.

When the Administration finally realized that they could not get rid of the skaters, they met with the CPDSA representatives and granted the CPDSA the right to obtain all the requisite permits needed to legally hold skating events. In the end, the attempt to rid the park of skaters had the opposite effect, forcing skaters to organize and get all the requisite permits while gaining the support of some of the officials in power.

Famous New York photographs from the 1890s show people ice skating on the Lake and the Boat Basin in Central Park. Roller Skating in the park was popular in the 1930s, which is depicted in a vintage poster for a roller skating event that took place on Halloween 1936.

