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Steel Hurtin' lays beating on Burning River Rollergirls

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The City of Cleveland has to be smarting after a pair of losses to teams from the 'burgh.

While the Steeler win over the Browns has gotten most of the ink, a group of hardhitting ladies set the tone with a decisive victory in the realm of roller derby.

The Steel City Derby Demons newly formed travel team added another page to the Pittsburgh-Cleveland rivalry last weekend when they took on the Burning River Rollergirls

Led by ace jammer Hurricane Heather, the Derby Demons won the team's first ever derby match 168-144.

The Derby Demons travel team, known as the Steel Hurtin' was just recently formed after they completed their first full season of derby action, says team Captain Betty Bonecrusher, whose real name is Jen Berardinelli.

Under the Women's Flat Track Derby Association rules, leagues must complete a full season before fielding a travel team.

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Bonecrusher was confident from the beginning that the team would do well, and was excited about adding to the rivalry.



"It's all in good fun," she says. "I know they're going to come out strong. We have a group of amazing girls. The best jammers, the best blockers in our league."

Cleveland's girls didn't lack the confidence to take on the Pittsburgh team. Not only did they confidently strut onto the rink with their orange tank tops and blue short-shorts, but they brought about 150 fans who filled a corner of the rink with signs, pompoms and enough noise to drown out the home fans at times.

But the Pittsburgh fans brought the noise as well, especially considering their team carried the momentum throughout the night. Even the legendary Steel Man came to support the Steel Hurtin'.

"Hey, that's what I'm here for," Steel Man says. "Steel Man is here for the Steel City Derby Demons."

While the victory was certainly a team effort, one of the Derby Demons stood out helmet and shoulders above the pack.

Hurricane Heather, who sported black and gold face paint, scored too many of the home team's points to even keep track of. Wearing number "Category 5," Hurricane Heather blew gale-force winds through the rink each time she circled the track.



She had at least three monster jams. She started the match with a 4-0 shutout, and followed that up with jams of 14-2 and 10-2.

Cleveland bench boss, Coach Stirfry, praised Pittsburgh's efforts, but also says his girls skated a sloppy match.

"We shot ourselves in one foot while Pittsburgh shot us in the other," says Stirfry, whose real name is David Clarich.

The Burning River Rollergirls just came off a match with another one of their rivals, Cincinnati. Stirfry is looking forward to the future of the Pittsburgh rivalry.

"Of course I would've liked to come home with a win," he says, "but we'll definitely be playing them in the future."

Bonecrusher was thrilled with how her team performed.

"I'm so proud of everybody," she says. "We just brought it out and showed Cleveland what's up."

The next home match at Bladerunners in Harmarville is on Jan. 26 against the DC Rollergirls.

For tickets or information, go online at www.steelcityderbydemons.com, or e-mail info@steelcityderbydemons.com.