

Birthday party games a long-time tradition in skate centers

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Almost all of us have, at one point or another, attended a birthday party at a skating rink. The idea of celebrating your friend's big day on skates just seemed great. The lights, music, physical activity and cake gave us everything we could want in a celebration. And when we attended these festivities, there were skating games galore!

For the younger children, games like "duck, duck, goose" and "hokey pokey" filled the time. When we grew older, racing games took precedence. "Shoot the duck" and forms of a dice game were also popular. These games added to the overall experience and kept us coming back.

Many of the games we played as young children on the playground — such as "red light, green light" shifted into the skating rink. The limbo was also a popular game, as was tag — in a variety of formats.

The game of dodge ball also found its way into the rink. Forgoing the traditional kickball, dodge ball on skates normally used a large, foam ball. Some-

times a child was chosen to be the thrower, other times it was a chaperone or the DJ. Normally, the children would line up at one end and skate to the other, trying to avoid the hurling balls. The last one skating was declared the winner.

"Shoot the duck," which became a popular racing game, was played on both



Actor James Garner (far right, back row) at a skating party at the Hollywood Roller Bowl in Hollywood, circa 1950's.

quad and inline skates. Each member of the race was pushed around the rink to gain momentum while in the squatting position. Once every contestant was ready they were all released. Those in

the race then skated on only one foot and began to glide across the floor. Participants on inline skates squatted on one skate while the toe of the other roller on the floor. Whoever went the furthest or completed the most laps would be declared the winner. This game demonstrated coordination in both balance and agility.

Another type of racing game was the push race. First, the racers designated a smaller track to skate around, typically using cones. Each participant again squatted on one skate while their partner attempted to push them. The skaters then glided across the floor around the set up track. When one or two laps around the track were completed, they declared the winner. This sprint-type race allowed for teamwork and coordination by both members.

Then there was the dice game; very similar to musical chairs. Six points around the rink were the designated zones and had corresponding numbers. Skaters proceeded to skate to music around the rink. Once the music stopped or a whistle blew, each skater entered the zone closest to him or her.

When every skater had reached a zone, the judge rolled the die. Whichever number came up meant that number was out, and all the skaters at that zone were out. The music then began again and the actions were repeated. Once the number of skaters was down to six or less, each chose a zone. Whichever number zone



G. Roy Mann, Jr. demonstrates how to skate on one foot for "shoot the duck."

was rolled with the die, the corresponding person then won the prize.

For groups, that form of roller hockey used inflatable hockey sticks and a type of birthday hat as the puck. Teams divided into four members and played in a round-robin format. Goals were set up across the floor instead of lengthwise. Games ended after a certain number of goals or when a time limit ran out. The winning team then won a prize pack.

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