



ASSOCIATION ON AMERICAN INDIAN AFFAIRS

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INDIGENOUS ROLLER DERBY PARTNERSHIP EMPOWERS NATIVE ATHLETES AND CENTERS CULTURE

Native Country, U.S.A., Wednesday, September 13, 2023 - The Association on American Indian Affairs has partnered with Team Indigenous Rising Roller Derby to support their mission and promote the Team's advocacy for Indigenous rights and visibility. The partnership is a natural fit, as both organizations are dedicated to promoting Indigenous rights. For example, Team Indigenous is working to raise awareness about issues like Missing and Murdered Indigenous Peoples, water rights, culture and sovereignty.

"Through our partnership, we will be working together to inspire a new generation of Indigenous athletes and raise awareness about the importance of honoring diverse Native cultures and traditions," said Shannon O'Loughlin, citizen of the Choctaw Nation and CEO and Attorney for the Association.

Roller derby is a sport that many Indigenous Peoples have joined for the athleticism and have found community and advocacy as well. It is a diverse and inclusive sport that welcomes athletes from all backgrounds.

In flat track derby, teams of skaters (quads only - no rollerblades allowed) race around an oval track, trying to lap members of the opposing team while blocking their opponents from doing the same. The game is played by two teams of five players, with one player from each team serving as the "jammer" who tries to score points by passing opposing team members on the track. This full contact game is one of the fastest growing women's sports.

Formed in 2019, Team Indigenous is made up of Indigenous skaters from across North America representing 25 sovereign Native Nations. Team Indigenous is therefore not affiliated with any state or country, making them a "borderless" team that is a symbol of diverse Indigenous Peoples. The mission of Team Indigenous is to unite the Indigenous roller derby community as a non-profit social justice organization that promotes Indigenous visibility and sovereignty through sports.

One of the unique aspects of Team Indigenous is their incorporation of traditional Indigenous practices into their sport. The Team incorporates traditional drumming, song, and

dance into their events, creating a powerful cultural experience for both skaters and spectators.

"We continue to participate in multiple tournaments and look forward to skating in the upcoming Borderless Round Robin Tournament in Denver in early November," said Karma, a citizen of Red Lake Nation Chippewa, and the Team's Sponsorship Co-Lead. "We are decolonizing with each win."

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The Association on American Indian Affairs is the oldest non-profit serving Native Country protecting sovereignty, preserving culture, educating youth and building capacity. The Association was formed in 1922 to change the destructive path of federal policy from assimilation, termination and allotment, to sovereignty, self-determination and self-sufficiency. Throughout its 100-year history, the Association has provided national advocacy on watershed issues that support sovereignty and culture, while working at a grassroots level with Native Nations to support the implementation of programs that support Native Peoples.

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