

Plate Sizing

Post from Skatelog Forum from DVW

Different disciplines call for different setups. So do different personalities and skating styles. You wouldn't try to race a Jeep on a Formula 1 track any sooner than you'd go mud bogging in a Lamborghini. Why do you think skates are any different?

Here's **basically** what different setups buy you.

Short. **Maximum agility and downright fun.** Why? The two major contact points between your foot and the ground are the heel bone and the metatarsal joints, or "ball" of the foot. If you size your plate so the axles are near these points, you generate a lot of plate action output for the given foot input. Very responsive skates.

Standard speed. Stability, power. For the very same reasons, a longer plate set with the axles forward and rearward of those points on the foot take more foot input to generate a given output from the plate. It's like turning down the sensitivity. Plus, axles well forward of the ball of the foot help translate stroke power into forward movement, so you can go faster.

Forward speed. Aussie style. Has its origins in outdoor quad speed skating, where the goal is to go really fast in a straight line outdoors on pavement. By moving the plate way forward, it allows the skater to take a lower stance and get his weight forward, like you would do if you were running a sprint. The axle way out in front plays on what I said above about lengthening the stroke and getting more power to the ground. Plus, in that setup, hitting crap on the roadway is less likely to throw you down face first. If you hit something, the front wheels pop up and over it instead of stopping dead.

Standard art. Has benefits to dance and figures skaters. More stable than a short setup, has the rear axle behind the heel joint, generally more stable for landing jumps. When I think of short plates, I think of the rear axle being placed just at the point where your weight wants to make the front of the skate pop up. Not handy if you're trying to land a mapes. Likewise, if you're doing loops, you don't want the plates to over-react to your foot. Precision is the goal, and that means tempering the skates response.

Jam. I get the impression that the serious jam skaters want a plate that fits their boot heel to toe, and where the axles are is secondary. The action of the plate is almost irrelevant, because of the types of moves being done. If anything, jam skaters tend to want soft wheels and stiff actions just because so much of what they do is more like break dancing with skates on. The long plates give them more non-leather contact surfaces on the bottom of the skates.

Now bear in mind, I've painted with a very broad brush here, and there are myriad shades of gray between each of these setups. In the end it's what works under your feet.

Reference: <http://www.skatelogforum.com/forums/showthread.php?p=258451#post258451>