Proper Fitting

Improper fit is the number one cause for skate failure and/or poor performance. To fulfill the basic needs of proper boot fitting, the following primary areas of concern must be addressed in order to make proper fit recommendations for Riedell skating boots.

BOOT LENGTH

Riedell Shoes, Inc. has developed the Riedell fitting device to provide an accurate measuring device for Riedell boots. Although the fitting devices are accurate if used properly, it is only an aid. Properly trained sales staff are needed for individual fit. The devices should never be used for the elimination of personalized fitting by trained sales personal.

The proper procedure for the use of the Riedell fitting device for determining proper boot length is to place the skater's foot firmly against the heel of the device in the standing position. Both feet should be measured. The furthest point of the longest toe should be used to indicate recommended boot length. It is recommended that whenever length is in question, always try on the smallest size first.

BOOT WIDTH

The proper boot width selection is critical. If a boot is too narrow, comfort will be affected and there is also a chance of potential foot injury. If the boot is too wide, poor performance, foot slippage and premature boot breakdown may occur. Selecting the proper width is essential to performance, skater comfort and boot longevity.

Both feet should be measured. Using the tape, measure the circumference of the widest portion of the ball of the foot. Remember to pull the tape snugly. It should be noted that extra care be used when measuring the circumference of the ball of the foot. In that each boot width changes approximately at 1/4" increments, accurate measurement is needed. Before any particular width is finally selected, actual boot fit is needed for final determination.

As with length, remember that if you have any questions on boot width, start your fitting with the narrowest boot first. Once again, such recommendations should be made by the professional fit specialist after all options have been tried.

Proper fitting of Riedell boots cannot be accomplished unless the boots have been prepared for fit.

HOW TO PREPARE BOOTS FOR FIT

Unlike many skate manufacturers, most mid range and upper level models of Riedell skating boots need to be prepared by the fitting individual prior to placing the boot on the foot.

The use of a form fitting counter, extensive comfort padding and the structure of the Riedell boots will not provide the skater immediate comfort unless the boot is properly prepared prior to fitting.

In addition, and even more important, Riedell's lasting construction will not allow for the skater to get their heel all the way back into the boot with out proper boot preparation, resulting in potential boot oversizing.

Boot preparation consists of opening up the heel counters of the boot and gently softening and warming of the quarter padding within the boot. Boot preparations should be done modestly and only to the point where the skater can get their foot all the way back in the boot to insure proper fit.

BALL PLACEMENT

It is very important to identify the placement of the ball of the foot in the boot. If the ball of the foot is too far forward in the boot, pinching and/or toe room may be sacrificed resulting in discomfort, injury or poor balance. If the ball of the foot is too far back toward the arch of the boot usually the boot is too long resulting in discomfort, premature boot breakdown and excessive foot slippage.

There are basically two ways to help determine proper placement of the ball of the foot in the boot. A very simple way is to remove the footbed from the boot and by carefully placing the skater's foot (using proper heel placement) on the footbed, you can visualize reasonable ball placement. This procedure will also give you a general observation as to the entire foot placement within the boot and it can aid you in verifying your boot length.

In adult skaters, you may accomplish this task by feel and verbal description of the boot (after being prepared properly for fit) and the boot is laced firmly on the skater's foot. On most "normal" and "average" feet, if the ball of the foot is in the proper boot placement, toe room will be adequate and a snug fit in width will result. In some extreme cases, individuals with extra long toes and/or very short arches, custom built boots may be required

IDENTIFYING INDICATORS OF MISFIT BOOTS

With proper understanding of boot fitting, it is relatively easy to determine if a boot is misfit. Such determination can be made when a boot is new, but as the boot is worn, such indicators usually become much more evident. The following indicators may assist with determining proper boot fit.

Ball area and throat of the boot

An extremely critical area to watch is the throat and ball area of the boots.

1. If the lacing pattern is drawing to close together or buckling of the eyestay area occurs when the boot is laced firmly on the skater, two possibilities exist:
    a. The boot is too long for the skater
    b. The boot is too wide for the skater
2. If the lacing pattern is extremely wide, or the ball and throat area is too wide apart, the reverse situation may exist.
    a. The boot length is too short
    b. The boot width is too narrow

In this situation, usually, the skater will complain of pinching or discomfort. Proper lacing in the throat area should be no closer together when the boot is laced snugly on the skater than the normal width of the throat of the unlaced boot.

3. If the lacing pattern is too close when laces are pulled snugly, the following may result:
    a. The skater will not obtain a snug fit, particularly after the boot is used, as the boot stretches to a certain degree when broken in.
    b. The skater will experience a lack of boot support
    c. Foot slippage will occur resulting in possible blisters and/or discomfort
    d. Poor skating performance
    e. Premature skate breakdown

Heel or ankle area

The second primary area of concern is the heel and/or ankle area. Remember that the majority of a boot's support is obtained from the counters and back quarters of the boot. If those areas are not snugly, heel slippage may result causing:

1. Blisters and/or foot irritations
2. Loss of structured support effecting performance
3. Premature skate breakdown

As with the throat area, the lacing pattern of the entire boot should be uniform. If the lacing pattern of the instep and ankle area is too close together, the boot may be too wide or too long. An excellent indicator is excessive heel slippage. If that results, all of the above listed problems will occur. If the lacing pattern is excessively wide, the boot may be too narrow or too short, once again, the skater will usually complain of discomfort.

The majority of misfit boots is usually caused by selecting a boot that is too wide for the skater rather than too narrow for the skater. It is suggested that the boot be fit as snug as possible in width without pinching. Remember, it is always better to adapt any particular spot on a boot, with the aid of a boot press or a ball and ring device than to go wider over the entire boot just to accommodate a particular area of the foot.

When determining proper or improper fit of a used boot, the examination of the laces and the footbed can provide valuable information on the boot fit. Usually the laces will stain or mark, which will indicate where they were pulled snug. In this way, you can re-lace the boot without the skater and determine the lacing pattern of the boot.

The footbed will also stain in use and show you exactly how the foot is fit in the skate. Indication of foot slippage can be found by the staining or imprint of the toes on the footbed. The darker or more dominate stain is caused by the weight of the foot and fit in length can be easily determined. The light edge stains on the footbed will indicate foot slippage, and the total impression of the little toe on the footbed is an excellent indication of the boot being to wide.

HEAT ACTIVATED FIT

All Riedell skating boots are designed to be heat molded to the foot. The best way for boot adjustment is to heat the boot with a heat gun or hair dryer in the area to be adjusted. Be careful not to overheat the boot as this can cause the leather to burn or delamination of the soles and uppers. If heating the boots in a skate boot oven, do not exceed a temperature of 180-200° F. Heat the boots until warm to the touch. Do not exceed 8 minutes. Do not use kitchen oven. Once the boots are warm, lace the skates tight to the skater's foot and leave on the foot for 5 minutes allowing to cool. If a problem area persists, warm the area with a heat gun and adjust with a boot press.