

## **Keep Your Feet In The Ground**

There is a saying within the workforce that a bad workman blames his tools. Well this could also be true for those dedicated tug of war pullers who have had a bad day on the rope. Probably the most important piece of equipment a puller requires other than the rope, are his boots. Since the inception of tug of war as a competitive sport in ancient Greece almost 1000 years ago, the sport, as well as the footwear has changed quite a bit, although the goal is exactly the same. In more recent times the boots being used by the pullers competing at the top level in World and European Championships, have generally been adapted ski boots or rollerblade boots. Here is a short guide on how to adapt rollerblade boots for tug of war in a few simple steps:-

- ❑ Purchase your rollerblades, not too expensive, but comfortable
- ❑ Unscrew the rollerblade fixings from the sole of the boot
- ❑ Make a template of the sole of the boot
- ❑ Use this template to mark a piece of 8 to 10mm thick black hard nylon, teflon or similar hard product and cut out with a suitable tool
- ❑ Screw this cut-out to the sole of the rollerblade boot. Screws should be fixed from inside the boot downwards into the nylon, and upward through the nylon into the sole, being careful with screw length so not to penetrate the inside of the boot - remember to remove any insoles before fixing.
- ❑ To create a heel, use 10mm nylon or teflon or similar hard material. Make a template of the heel section, about 90mm long from the back of the boot. (Refer to Rule 8.4.1 "Outdoor shoes" in TWIF Rules Manual.)
- ❑ Cut the nylon heel piece to size and screw to the new nylon sole of the boot.
- ❑ Using the same heel template, mark and cut a piece of steel with a maximum thickness of 6.5 mm.
- ❑ Screw onto the heel of the boot

You should now have a completed tug of war boot ready for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The one thing any puller has to remember is that no matter how up to date or sophisticated the boots, they are only as good as the puller wearing them, and any puller is only as good as the effort he or she puts in to get to the top level in their sport.

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