



## STEEL SHOE GUIDANCE

Loose or detached steel shoes present a potentially serious safety concern for flat track competitors – the racer themselves as well as other racers nearby. The loose shoes may become entangled in a machine's drive chain or rear wheel, or they may get run over by the racer's machine or a competitor's machine. After consulting with several steel shoe fabricators, we have identified the following variables that decrease the likelihood of a steel shoe coming loose from a boot during a meet:

**Replace your old, damaged steel shoe straps.** The primary cause of steel shoes coming loose from the boot is a loose or broken strap. If your steel shoe strap is torn, or frayed, or the D-rings seem to come loose often, replace it. Only use an intact, undamaged steel shoe strap on your steel shoe. Never use a torn steel shoe strap. Pull the strap snug around your boot and then secure it tightly.

**Screw your steel shoe to your boot heel.** Adding a screw or two through the side wall of your steel shoe into the vertical heel of your boot decreases the chances of losing your steel shoe. This may not be feasible if you frequently remove your steel shoe from your boot, as this may result in premature deterioration of the heel material. However, if you never ride without your steel shoe, then this may be worth considering.

**Wear boots with soft rubber heels.** Boots with soft rubber heels grip the side walls of your steel shoe better than boots that have hard plastic heels. Better grip means less slip, which decreases the chances of your steel shoe coming loose from your boot during a meet.

**Wear boots with a vertical (non-tapered) heel.** If your boot has a vertical (non-tapered) heel, it will hug the entire side wall of your steel shoe better. However, if your boot has a tapered heel, then it will have very little direct contact with the side wall of your steel shoe. More contact between the heel of your boot and the side wall of your steel shoe decreases the chances of a steel shoe coming loose from your boot during a meet.

**Wear stiffer boots.** A stiffer boot decreases the chances of your steel shoe coming loose from your boot during a meet. Motocross style boots are typically stiffer than road race style boots because a motocross racer needs more ankle and lower leg support than a road racer does. Stiffer boots means less flex, which means fewer forces are working to separate your shoe from your boot. (A stiffer left boot also lowers the risk of left ankle injuries when racing flat track).

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