

# The Fun Times

Your Guide to Amusement Industry Products and Services by Automated Batting Cages/J&J Amusements/Fun Parts Xpress

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# Now, More is Less!

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J&J's class leading Scorpion Go-Kart outshines all the competition with its wealth of industry leading standard features.

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8811 Huff Ave NE.  
Salem, OR 97303

### Letters to the Editor

The Funtimes welcomes all readers written comments, questions, and suggestions regarding any aspect of the Newsletter. We reserve the right to edit your letter and all letters must include your name, address and daytime telephone number. Direct all correspondence (by mail or electronically) to Letters to the Editor.

### Automated Batting Cages

#### Phone

(503)390-5714  
(800)578-2243

#### Fax

(503)390-4974

#### E-Mail

info@battingcages.com

#### Internet

http://www.battingcages.com

### J&J Amusements, Inc

#### Phone

(503)304-8899  
(800)854-3140

#### Phone Extensions

Parts Department: ext 1  
Sales Department: ext 2  
Service Department: ext 3

#### Fax

(503)304-1899

#### Email

info@jjamusements.com

#### Internet

http://www.jjamusements.com

### Fun Parts Xpress

#### Phone

(503)304-8899  
(800)854-3140

#### Fax

(503)304-1899

#### Email

parts@funpartsexpress.com

#### Internet

http://www.funpartsexpress.com

## Safety Alert:

Canal Walk, an Amusement park in South Africa, has denied it is liable for R3 million in damages claimed in connection with the scalping of a 10-year-old girl in a go-karting accident.

It has issued a third party notice in which it claims a contribution of the damages or indemnity from three third parties: Indoor Grand Prix, its director Wayne Yates, and Tania Grobler, who took the girl go-karting at Indoor Grand Prix.

Andrea Katzeff's long hair became caught in the axle of the go-kart, ripping off her scalp. She had emergency medical attention and prolonged treatment.

Her father, Neill Katzeff of Welgemoed, is suing in his personal capacity and as the father of his minor daughter.

In papers before the court, he alleges that the accident was caused by the negligence of Canal Walk and the Indoor Grand Prix.

DON'T LET THIS HAPPEN TO YOU, MAKE SURE  
HAIR LONGER THAN SHOULDER LENGTH IS SECURED!!

## Soccer in the USA

As the soccer craze continues across the United States we are still confident that the ABC Soccer System has a definite potential in the entertainment industry. Children, teenagers and adults alike are participating in ever increasing numbers. The most common and logical location for these cages is in existing or new family fun centers, and in conjunction with a batting cage. They require a minimal amount of space and are relatively inexpensive to build. The maintenance is extremely low and do not require the constant supervision as a batting cage does. The soccer cage can be modified in its design to fit in smaller and otherwise unusable areas. They are available in 2, 3, 4, or 5 stall systems. The stalls widths can range from 8' to 15' with the common length being 70'.

In most cases the revenue will not be as substantial as a batting cage, but the reduced installation and operating expense can still make this a cost effective venture. The soccer cage is viewed as something new and unique. They are a different type of activity that can appeal to certain members of the family, and entice them to spend a few more dollars at your facility.

ABC manufactures the most dependable and operationally the best functioning soccer equipment available. We have been through the "fire" in the design and development of this system and feel confident it will meet all expectations in its performance.



Call Today!  
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# Digital Timing Display: Increase Revenue and Never Look Back

Several pioneers of the concession kart industry come from the north, as in north of the border north. As in Winnipeg, Manitoba. We're talking Blue Bombers here. Brian Legary and his business partner Grant Pronishen now own and operate Proleg Technologies, the "Kartrol" people. But before that they operated Go Kart tracks, family fun centers and water parks. Being techno freaks and Canadian can get you into trouble (or perhaps it's the moose meat and beans), but it does make for interesting times and on occasion pays off. Such was the case when they were one of the first to install a digital Display Timing System at their kart track. Here are some of the unique ways they increased revenue and never looked back.

## Where's the Coin Mech?

There are ways to promote sales with the timing display system that haven't been invented yet, but here are some that work.

## Racing is secondary

Make it fun. It is, after all, your middle name. Racing Venus have their place and can certainly be a part of your overall mix. But keep in mind that racing brings competition, and that brings its own set of problems. You would not believe what some people will do for a trophy, let alone money. A mild mannered guy suddenly becomes a Rottweiler on Angel Dust. Keep it fun, lighthearted and get people involved. How? you say? Read on.

## Basic Overall Operation

The software is set up to allow a "staggered" start. It tracks each kart's time from the point that it first crosses the signal line. This way, all karts are timed equally, regardless of their position in the pit lane. Refer to this as a timed "event," rather than a race. At the end of the "event" the top six times are displayed on the Digital Display until the next "event" starts. A printout shows all karts and



Win, Win!  
Let advertisers  
help you add to  
your track!

their respective positions. Post this to a clipboard and hang it in a spot where the participants will crowd around and compare times. You will notice complete strangers begin to talk to each other and often challenge each other to another "go." As the riders become more aware, you will find they concentrate on the best "line" and avoid bumping. This reduced wear and tear on the equipment may well pay for the system by itself. Increased re-ridership has been estimated at up to thirty percent.



Brian Legary

Leon Wilbanks

Grant Pronishen

## Group Events

The most popular venue can be labeled the "Enduro." This one hour event with six riders involves the staggered start and a so called "hot pit." (Sounds like something from a deodorant commercial). A portion of the track is coned off and the teams change drivers at pre-determined times. Drivers raise their hands to indicate they are pitting. The cones are set up so that karts come to a full stop, then pull ahead another 30-40 feet to another stop lane with one cone in the center. Drivers have to stop without touching any one of the cones, or penalty points are assessed. The driver gets out and once the next driver is in and seat belted, an attendant removes the cone - and off they go. If a kart comes into

*Continued on page 4...*

....Continued from page 3

the pit area while it's occupied by another kart, the driver would have to wait at the first set of cones until the other kart left the driver change area. As you can see, some strategy begins to develop. Over the one hour, the teams decide the order they go in and how many laps each driver will do. If the pit is in use, it messes with the whole scheme, so pit signals and driver communication begin to come into play and the excitement builds. As you can imagine, the company teams with secretaries, salesmen and accountants obviously involve some slow drivers as well as some would-be-racers, so it makes for a great team-building event. The PA system can be used to announce positions and tactics. A team that appears to be leading on the reader board perhaps will have a driver change left to do, and as time goes on, it is difficult to tell who is leading until the last few minutes of the event. Companies will love this type of event. An accounting firm, for example, might invite a number of its clients out. You will find that these people bring their own companies and/or families back to the park.

September is a great month to pre book these types of events during the week days. Brian remembers a furniture company that came back every year, booked the track for three hours and held their own events. As a result of one of these events, a lady called and booked the track for her husband's 60th birthday party. With lots of blue haired ladies putting around the track, there were no incidents and no tire wear. "Easy money," he recalls.

## League Events

For league events with your timing system, set time aside when you are not normally busy, perhaps an hour before closing so that customers can see the events and get interested in what's happening on the track. The league is a pre-sign-up event that involves a "spring series" and a "summer series" of some six events. Teams are entered and prepaid. Strict rules are set ahead of time. Typical charges are from \$6000 to \$10000 per event per kart. The race can be 30 minutes to one hour. The park keeps track of results and point standings for the series. Obvious spin-offs here are sponsorship and other advertising, press releases on the winners, etc.

## Overall: A good Thing?

Brian says, "There's no question in my mind the timing system more than paid for itself. Probably three times easily in the first year. It can diversify what you do with the track significantly. The type of business we did with those league events and parties would be hard to do on a normal go kart track. You bring a company out and the first thing they want to do is put each other to the wall for a laugh, you know. When it was an organized event, it became fun. It's not like those indoor karting things where they have real emphasis on the speed. This was plain fun, and we stressed it from the start. We had penalties for rough driving. When they came into the final set of cones, when the guy was buckled, the attendant would count down ten seconds with big arm swings, and the whole crowd chanted and got into it. It was a fun event. It took the whole concept and made it into an amusement event rather than a go kart ride or a race. Especially if you had mixed crowds, you'd get one or two slow drivers, and the rest of the team would be biting its nails. A good time was had by all and we enjoyed the trip to the bank."

## Letter from a customer

We received this note in an e-mail the other day and thought we'd share. We'll continue to do our best to maintain this kind of relationship with our customers. The following is from Derrick Johnson of Nazkarts Family Fun Center.

*Thank you Lord,*

*We got'em..... Man the carts look awesome!!!! We caught hell off loading because we didn't have a dock, so we had to build a make shift ramp in the truck to off load by hand. Beside a few scratches and bruises and feeling like the HULK afterwards, things went fine once we got a system going.*

*Overall, with the service, care, and outstanding prices that you guys have given us, I would do it again today. Marvin I can't begin to tell you how much you guys mean to us. I'll say it again and please read this to your staff. The way you treat your customers reflect on your staff. Your attitudes and endless dedication to help track owners is what keep us coming back. Special hat of to the production crew for a great job getting those carts ready so fast. Big thank you to Cheri for keeping in constant communication with me by phone, and e-mail with updates. Cheri always returned my calls and e-mails the same day. Another big thank you to the technical assistants crew. They answered a lot of question for us as well as you Marvin early on and throughout the last two years. Oh and last but not least "Eric" who is your assistant I believe Marvin.. You two guys along with your team set the standard for all of the other dealers. Everybody is important at J&J. You have earned another customer for life!!!!!!*

*Thanks from the owners of Nazkarts Family Fun Center in Henderson NC. If you guys ever need a reference for upcoming new customers DO NOT HESITATE TO CALL ME! When I'm finish with them they'll be calling you back to apologize for having doubt...You guys are awesome!!!!!!*

*Derrick Johnson  
Nazkarts Family Fun Center  
Henderson, NC*

Thanks for the kind words Derrick! That really puts into perspective our company motto...

**"Constantly striving  
to give you more  
than you expect."**

# SPECIALS



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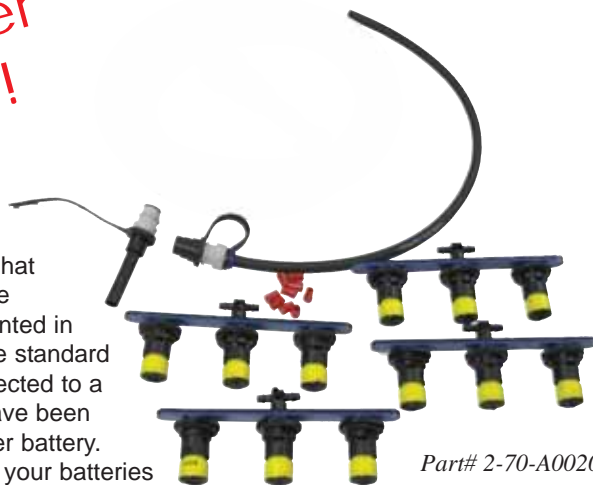
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Part# 2-70-A0020

Xpress Flow has also made this process even easier with the Portable distilled water cart. Why mess around with transporting your batteries to the water location when you can easily cart the water to the batteries.. Its simple, just wheel the cart over to

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Part # 2-70-A0021

**Only \$24.95 each.**

**No need to pull the motor to top up the batteries!**

# Does your maintenance department make money?

By Kevin Bell

Is your shop ship shape or headed for disaster? For many park managers, this question may be hard to answer. Here are some tips to help you with that very issue. Let's start with the basics.

How does the shop look? Is it organized? Can you see the workbench? How long will it take to find a needed tool or part? Most park managers can easily tell how well the kitchen or snack bar is kept by just walking through the area. Shops should be the same - well, let's be realistic: you're not going to eat anything that comes from the shop, but keeping things organized is the same in any room. Quite frankly, too many times on visits to different parks I have tried to help repair equipment and asked, "do you have the needed part?" And the answer was: "I don't know." worse yet, in some shops the mechanics would look around to find the same part in three or four different areas.

How large is the yearly parts bill? Are you repairing broken parts or replacing them? It is normal to see parts cost increase as the karts get older, but when a motor is worn out, get a new one! It is much more cost-effective than trying to rebuild a worn out motor. In addition, you can reclaim many usable items (i.e. starters, head and so on) from the old motors. A good lead mechanic should be maintaining a fleet instead of waiting for the Saturday night failure. Failures will happen, of course, but how well the fleet is maintained will directly affect how many failures you have.

Does your mechanic blame every problem on manufacturer design and construction? Believe me, I realize nobody's perfect. On occasion, issues will arise with our equipment, but "manufacturer error" should not be the answer to every problem that comes up. Parts get worn out; sometimes, things just break - especially when they're not maintained properly. That said, if design or manufacturing issues arise, J&J stands behind its products. We take care of our customers.

Recently, I had the pleasure to work with Mike Hartwell, the new shop manager of a park in Meridian, Idaho. Mike was dropped into a park that was maintained at the minimum level and it was amazing to see the difference in the quality of the shop and equipment



*Before, what a clutter.*

after he took charge (take a look at the before and after photos shown). It didn't happen overnight, but the change was tremendous. On a recent Monday, the park's manager and I sat talking. He remarked that it was the first time after a busy weekend he'd had no cars break down.



*After Mike cleaned it up, much more organized.*

A well-maintained fleet and an organized shop are not out of reach. You will be pleasantly surprised by the rewards of a little forethought, organization, and attention to detail. Good maintenance people do not cost money, they make money.

Kevin's Byline:

Kevin Bell worked as a mechanic, shop manager, and regional manager of fun centers from 1986 to 1999. Since then, he has worked for J&J Amusements.

## Sooner or Later

In a recent issue we talked about the PT-6 Electronics that ABC is now using. We have seen a number of cage owners this year upgrade to this new system and are happy with the new features, dependability and simplicity of this system. In addition to upgrading the electronics we now have owners replacing the entire equipment package. Nothing lasts forever, and that includes your pitching machines, conveyor system, warning signs and the other components that make your cage function. Even with the low maintenance and necessary repairs that keeps everything running, there comes a time to consider a complete change. The costs of replacement parts and increased labor expense for these repairs can make this consideration attractive. The guys that have done this are quite pleased with the new appearance and prefer putting that revenue in their pockets rather than back into the equipment. It's kind of like trading in an old dependable car. You finally realize that it won't last forever, and who doesn't like sliding in behind the wheel of a new one? So, sooner or later, whether it's a new electronic system or a complete equipment change, you will be happy with the end results.

Give us a call to discuss your options or receive a quote on a new package.  
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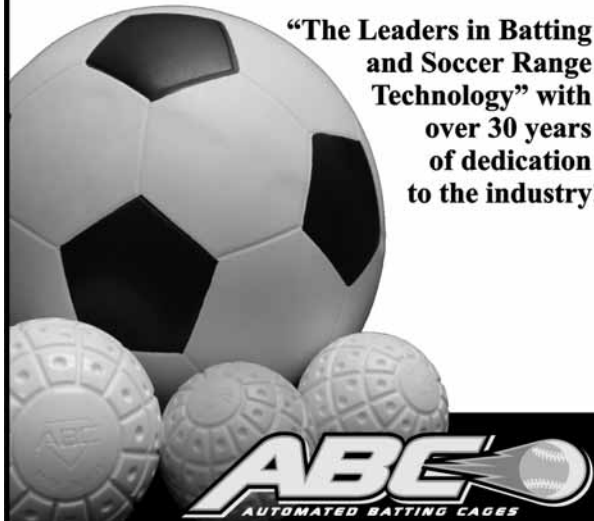
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