

The Fun Times

NEWSLETTER

Your Guide to Amusement Industry Products and Services by Automated Bowling Cages/J&J Amusements/KidzKart Inc.

Summer 1997

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MALIBU ENTERTAINMENT INTL. OPENS THE WORLD'S MOST EXCITING GO-KART RACE TRACK FEATURING J&J'S NEW "F-50" GO-KART!

Like many of our products the F-50 was born out of the expressed need of one of our long time customers. In January of this year Paul Zellar and Charlie Haga of Malibu Entertainment Worldwide contacted us with a concept that revolved around a multi-track venue that would emphasize various styles of concession go karts. These new facilities would be constructed at existing Malibu Grand Prix locations and would be called Malibu SpeedZone.

What they needed from J&J was a sleek kart that could drive high or low around turns, resist spin outs and give the driver the "feel" of a LeMans style race car. This would involve a new chassis and body and would have to be built and delivered before May 23rd of this year. Whoa! Tall Order! Our question was, "Could we get it done in time?" After discussions with our prime vendors we set about building a prototype chassis. This involved lengthening the wheel base of our standard kart by eight inches to fifty-two inches; it also moved the engine ahead of the rear axle for better weight distribution. The kart was to be a single passenger model but to get the wide racy look and to improve cornering ability we opted for the width of our double wide chassis. This would also allow for our new 4.75 gallon extended range fuel tank to be used. The prototype saw testing in February with Paul and Charlie in attendance. Single wheel drive with 9hp engine configuration showed good power characteristics but had a tendency to spin out on hard cornering. The system was converted to two wheel drive and the front wheel caster set up accordingly. The improvement was immediate and by fine tuning the front end geometry and increasing the steering wheel diameter the chassis began to put smiles on

everyone involved. They liked the chassis - it used well proven parts and would feature some improvements, like 3/8" lug studs, as well.

But what about the body? Tearing through the



J&J's NEW F-50 Style Go-Kart

automobile magazines we hit upon the Ferrari F-50, sleek to be sure, great lines, rounded front end, high back with short distance from rear wheels to back of car, it could be scaled down maybe, but how would it look on our chassis? We scanned the image and with the aid of some high tech computer gear this was overlaid on the drawing of the chassis. It looked great! With Malibu's blessing we set about covering the zillion details that would have to be done to build the 120 units before the May deadline. Without going into all the gory details, suffice it that a ton of midnight oil was burned, but with the help of a lot of dedicated people we were able to make the F-50 happen.

At the present time Malibu SpeedZone holds an exclusive on the F-50 body, so it's not for sale to anyone else. But how about if we build a special kart for your facility. Call Marvin Foster about it, It can be done! 1-800-854-3140 n

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The International Family Entertainment Center

Exploring SAFETY ISSUES



By Dan Hansen

Questions Managers Should Ask Themselves About Their Go-Kart Track

In visiting over 130 amusement facilities in my travels, these are the questions most managers don't have an answer for.

Ask yourself:

- When was the last time we had a safety meeting?
- Do we have an employee manual that covers go-kart track operations?
- When was the last time fire extinguishers were checked?
- Has everyone been trained how to operate our Go-Kart Shutdown System? Is it being used properly?
- Do we have the latest go-kart update and technical bulletins from our manufacturer?
- Are we using seatbelts properly? Are they being checked before every ride?
- Do we have up-to-date service records on ALL go-karts?

If you have no problem answering these questions then you are among an elite few that have things well organized. If not, please read on.

Here are some of the major areas to concentrate on:

An integral part of business is safety. Keep in mind that safety should be spelled: "liability," unsafe operations show negligence and damages can be collected. Remember this quote, "If a customer in Europe walks onto the track and gets hit he is called 'stupid'. In this country he is called an 'owner'."

Safety is just as important as service. You, as a supervisor/manager/owner, play a very important role in accomplishing and maintaining an excellent overall company safety record within each department. As in most instances, the more effort you place on safety the better the results.

The most important parts of your safety and operating systems are your employees. Hiring, training, and retraining good employees are essential to the success of any business. A Go-Kart Track Operation Manual is a good management tool that will make hiring and training employees more productive. These systems will also reduce employee turnover by making the employees feel more knowledgeable and confident in their jobs. If you do not have your policy and procedures in writing, now is a good time to capture them on paper.

Fire extinguishers should be checked daily and inspected

monthly by a trained person or a certified fire extinguisher company. Make it part of your daily track inspection and make sure you keep good records.

Here are some general guidelines using Go-Kart shutdown systems.

- 1) All karts must be adequately slowed down before entering pit area.
- 2) The staff should be trained in all aspects of the operating the system so they will understand the operational effects and limitations.
- 3) The system should be checked daily to ensure it is functioning properly and always keep up-to-date records.
- 4) It's a good rule of thumb not to allow your attendants on the track running surface or in "rail compression" area while go-karts are in full run mode. Only allow them to enter track area when go-karts are in a shut down mode.

When I visit go-kart tracks around the country, the most common problem I see is improper use of seatbelts.

- 1) Check the condition of each go-kart daily. Inspect all webbing, buckles, anchored and stitching. Any seatbelt not in good condition or not working properly should be replaced immediately. If belts are not kept clean they will become stiff and cause chafing.
- 2) Before fastening seatbelts, be sure that the customer is in a good driving or riding position and their back is against back pad. No Slouching!
- 3) Insert the customer's arms under shoulder straps and close by crossing over their body with the latch plate and buckle. Lock seatbelt by inserting male latch plate into buckle.
- 4) Before taking out belt tension, position lap portion as low as possible across hips. Never allow a customer to ride with the lap portion riding across stomach or chest. (see picture)

- 5) Once seatbelt is in the proper position, pull green colored tension tabs to remove slack. Note: J&J go-karts are equipped with four point seatbelts and have color coded tabs for safety and ease of use. Green to tighten and Orange, Red or Violet to loosen.

Written Daily Inspection Checklist is very important. Your facility must know that the go-karts have been properly inspected. Record keeping will reduce your facility's exposure to potential liabilities. The Written Checklist assists the operators and enables them to thoroughly and properly inspect the go-karts. Remember if you are ever involved in litigation these will become evidence.

When was the last time you talked to your manufacturer? The go-kart industry and J&J are constantly improving go-kart safety, contact your manufacture for product updates and bulletins. More Safety Issues on Page 6.....



HOW TO CONTACT THE FUNTIMES

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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.

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Next Issue

EXPLORING SAFETY

NEW PRODUCTS

TECH TALK

Introducing J&J's New Employee



J&J has welcomed and is proud to introduce Terry Nunley as our new Parts and Shipping Manager. He has taken the position of Patty Frost, whom we will miss. You may recognize his name from being part of ABC; he was their Purchasing Manager before transferring his expertise our way. We feel confident that his experience and commitment will be a value to us all. Terry's a great addition to our staff and we are excited to have him on our team.

It's *Show-Time*

The 1997 Fall shows are almost here. We want to extend a personal invitation for you to attend one or more of these shows. This year we will have the largest presentation of Go-karts and Bumper Boats in the history of our company! We hope you'll be able to join us!

FUN EXPO: September 23th - 26th
Booth #3009 Las Vegas
914-993-9200

WORLD WATERPARK: October 12th - 14th
Booth #150 San Antonio
913-599-0300

IAAPA: November 19th - 22nd
Booth #5172 Orlando
703-836-4800

LEISUREXPO: February 19th - 21st, 1998
Booth #116 Fort Lauderdale
305-448-7976

We encourage early registration for the shows and hotels! If you would like discount vouchers for the shows, let us know.

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Lift, Air Automatic 24" x 80"	Part#1031	\$705.60
Lift, Extensions (2) 8" x 80"	Part#1032	\$129.00

SLIPPING THROUGH THE CRACKS

All metal parts will eventually fatigue and crack under stress; this is especially true in those areas where welding has occurred. Several states are now requiring engineering inspections of amusement ride structures (including go-karts and bumper boats). The current recommendation of J&J concerning this is:

J&J recommends non-destructive testing, including visual inspection of all weldments, front wheel spindles, rear axle and brake mounting brackets by a practicing Engineer no later than three years from the date unit is first placed into service and annually thereafter.



We have had reports from the field that indicate the occurrence of cracking around welds in the area of the passenger foot rest plate on double seat karts. Inspect all of your karts for evidence of metal fatigue or cracking. Also check to make sure the foot rest plate on all double seat karts shows no evidence of cracking, looseness or interference

with the throttle rod behind this plate.



"Softflite" is a Hit!

Fall Special Offered!

The new "Softflite" ball from ABC has been enthusiastically endorsed by our batting range owners. After an initial stumble on delivery and with some production inconsistencies, the Softflite" promises to be the only ball for the batting range industry.

"The slightly softer ball and the new orange color have been very popular with our batters in the three locations that we own", states Dick Hall, Vice President of ABC. "We began using the ball late last winter and the repeat business and customer spending increased because they didn't have the stinging-hands problems from our harder balls. We will never use anything but these balls again! It is one of the best new products that we have ever produced!"

The batting range owners also experienced the benefits from the softer ball including fewer hand injuries and much less bat breakage. At times, the development of the ball has been a rocky road but the initial problems with the balls have been resolved and ABC is offering several programs to replace these initial balls. Please call Customer Service for details.

A Special "SoftFlite" sale is being offered to reduce an inventory overstock. The "SoftFlite" balls will be sold on a first-come first-serve basis. From now until these balls are gone the price will be \$20.00 per dozen. If you need balls for next year, this is an opportunity to save!

Batting Range *Safety*

By Doug Spray

A risky trend that appears to be developing across the country is batting cages operating without an attendant on duty. There are several reasons why we feel that an attendant must be on duty at all times. Safe operation of the batting cage requires that your customers are wearing a helmet with protective face guard, that the cage they select does not contain a machine throwing dangerously above their ability, or that other unsafe actions are taking place. An attendant monitoring the cage can insure that the safety rules are followed and the proper protective equipment is being used. This will greatly limit your legal exposure to any accident, should they occur. The added benefits are increased interaction with the customers, and being available to quickly eliminate any problems with the equipment. Customers are likely to spend more time, (more money) and return to your facility if the hitting experience is trouble free. Be sure to combine this with a friendly 'thank you' upon leaving.

Since the atmosphere of litigation is on the rise, the importance of proper employee training is more important than ever. A standard training program with each new employee and an annual refresher course with returning employees should be a mandatory procedure contained within your facility's operating standards.

PRODUCT NEWS



Coming Soon to Trade Show Near You!

"Select-A-Pitch"

ABC will unveil it's brand NEW "Select-A-Pitch" batting system during the coming trade show season.

This interactive "Batter Controlled" system allows every batter to select a variety of speeds and pitching heights from each batting stall!

"Select-A-Pitch" can be added to any existing "ABC" batting range operation!!

Look for our booth at the Fun Expo in Las Vegas-September 23-26th. We are located in Booth #3019!

Also showing at the IAAPA show in Orlando- November 19-22th.

We are located in Booth #5173

Recent Reviews:

"GOTTA HAVE IT!" -Don Halls

"AWESOME" -Tim Sorge

"TWO THUMBS UP!" -Quintin Putnam

MANY THANKS TO OUR CUSTOMERS

Charles Davies exhibited some of that famous English (actually Welsh) courage when he decided to install a new 6 stall batting cage in Tenby, Wales. Despite the huge interest in cricket, not much baseball is played in Great Britain. The novelty and uniqueness of a batting cage has Charles anticipating success on this new addition to the existing "Heatherton Country Park". Now, if they just knew how to hold a bat.....

Ed Schultz has added another 7 cage system to his business interests. This will be the second site Ed has installed cages in the last 2 years. Good Luck Ed, and thanks for the business!

Jim Parker built a new 9 cage system in Tyler, TX about the same time as Lance Watkins was adding a 6 stall cage to his fun center in Texarkana, TX. The Lone Star State can add 2 more individuals to it's fine list of batting cage owners.

Vince Rutledge purchased a fleet of Kidzkarts to help pro-

vide new kiddie attractions at his park in Wildwood PA. Coupled with the bumper boats, the Kidzkarts has provided a nice boost to his birthday party business.

Roy Gentry decided to replace his "Brand X" electric cars with 6 of our Kidzkarts. He has successfully operated a electric kiddie car track for several years at "3 Flags Over Padre" in South Padre Island, TX. Last report: Kidzkarts and track doing fine!

For all others not specifically mentioned, we extend our sincere appreciation for choosing ABC and KidzKart as your equipment supplier. We wish you all a great season and continued good fortunes.

Many Thanks continued on back.....

MANY THANKS...

Leaping headlong into the Family Fun Center business in Lima, Peru is a family park located in the infield of a world class Horse Racing track.

The facility is Discovery Peru's Daytona Park located at Hipodromo de Monterrico, Surco and is made up of two go-kart tracks, bumper boat pond, bumper cars, kidz kart area, miniature golf, paddle boats, lazer tag, ball crawl, skate board bowl, birthday party rooms, video pavillion and large food court (including Burger King and Pizza Hut). All this is surrounded by a very large complex with two giant grand stands with events taking place simultaneously. Their recent order of go-karts kidzkarts and bumper boats, kept us busy building and shipping from Salem this spring.

Service Manager Dan Hansen drew the lucky straw and was off for Lima shortly after we shipped the containers to train staff in the service and operation of this large fleet.



J&J's Bumper Boats Head South



J&J's Dan Hansen helps unload the Go-kart Shipment



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