

Concession Go-Kart Track Design

By Peter F. Olesen, P.E.

The design of your concession go-kart track can be approached in a number of ways, some of which may have positive impacts on your bottom line, while others can drastically reduce your potential throughput and resulting revenues. The design of a track configuration is not rocket science. It is however, an element in the ultimate success or failure of the overall venture. In most cases, poor or boring design will not drive customers away completely. It can and will reduce the number of repeat rides and return trips to your facility.

Kart manufacturers and design-build firms have been generating what we feel to be less exciting and entertaining tracks for years. They follow the same procedures they've used for years, from archaic geometrics, outdated pavement design specifications and mediocre track construction methods, to concentration on the simplest and cheapest ways of getting the job done.

There are better ways to design facilities that do not increase construction costs but greatly increase the ride experience, as well as prolonging the life span of the track surface, barrier systems, kart bodies and chassis and greatly increasing the number of rides generated annually.

Every owner/operator has expectations of getting what was paid for when obtaining track plans, hiring a contractor and ultimately opening the facility. Expectations often far exceed reality, especially when competitors open up facilities that incorporate modern design and construction and end up attracting many of your customers.

A properly designed facility will often discourage competition from building too close. Word gets around as to the best tracks. They are the ones that attract the dedicated kart riders that contribute greatly to the track's bottom line.

Our track designs are based on long experience in track design that takes into consideration challenging geometrics, entertainment level, driver skill levels, kart performance, placement on the site to maximize exposure and to minimize excess excavation or fill, track and infield drainage and other issues involved with creating the most entertaining go-kart experience for the target market of each track.

In order to keep abreast of the go-kart industry we visit as many tracks as possible, both our designs and others; discuss ride experience with track guests and track staff and discuss the overall experience and satisfaction levels of the track owners. The ultimate goal is to identify the designs and specific elements of the tracks that appeal to the guests and meet with the approval of the operators in terms of entertainment value and safety.

Through the years there have been a number of major changes in track, pit and safety gate design that contribute to both increased safety and enjoyment. More subtle changes in barrier design have also improved safety and reduced down time.

As a firm of engineers and planners we strive to create track designs that will outshine the competition while still encompassing the latest advances in design to place our clients ahead of the competition. While each site and available space is unique, there are many elements that share common safety and operational features that increase the overall experience of guests and management alike.

Peter is a registered professional engineer in numerous states and the President of Entertainment Concepts, Inc. (formerly Peter F. Olesen and Associates, Inc.) a firm with more than 28 years of experience in the design of family entertainment centers, both outdoor and indoor, stand alone go-kart tracks and miniature golf courses, bumper boat ponds and related attractions. The firm has been at the forefront of go-kart, miniature golf course and bumper boat pond design, having brought about many innovations in safety, geometrics, design and construction methods that are now widely emulated throughout the industry. The firm has performed more than 410 projects in 41 states, Angola, Brunei, Canada (Alberta, Ontario and Quebec), Cuba (Guantanamo Bay), Kazakhstan, Mexico, Puerto Rico and Saudi Arabia. These projects span feasibility, concept development, master plans, final design and construction engineering. He is a member of the faculty of Foundations Entertainment University, has presented seminars at the International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions, Fun Expo, Kart Expo and Leisure Expo as well presenting go-kart safety seminars for the State of Ohio. He has, and continues to write articles for industry magazines and internet newsletters.

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