



## Amusement Products at the Kart Expo

by Dutch Magrath, president of Amusement Products and Amusement Construction

Amusement Products attended the Kart Expo in Michigan in May of this year. The show focuses on commercial go-kart racing facilities, as compared to traditional Family Entertainment Centers (FECs). The proprietor of High Caliber Karting, Jordan Munsters, along with his partners Zach and Casey, did a fantastic job putting the show on. It featured great food and the unique opportunity to race the vendors' karts against each other on their "Long Track," which combines their two smaller tracks into one mega track!

This opportunity to race and compare karts is what excited the AP team and is why we attended. We looked forward to putting our USA Race Karts Model E up against the European models that often claim our "family karts" are heavy and slow.

Ironically, that's only half true. The Racing Model E and Lightning go-karts can indeed go slow for six-year-olds, featuring seats that move forward nine inches and steering that tilts down for kids aged six to ten—providing smooth and gentle takeoffs. Yes, our karts are heavier than the European models at 700 lbs. (including the new lithium battery) because we use enough steel to make them last 10+ years.

Unlike our European competitors, who require operators to purchase a separate kiddie kart for younger drivers, our karts are versatile. What they don't understand is that heavy and durable doesn't mean heavy and slow. When racing karts go under 30 mph, horsepower—or kilowatts, in the case of electric karts—can be added to overcome the weight.

We knew we had the power, but did we have the handling?

Both the Lightning and Model E have frames specifically designed for race performance. Because of our karts' versatility (ROOKIE–NOVICE–RACE–COMPETITION modes), the steering had to hug tight turns while remaining easy for kids to control at lower speeds. So, how did we perform head-to-head?

One of the portions of the show that the Amusement Products design team was looking forward to was the "Test Drive" where you could race the karts from each supplier at the same time. While we were confident that our 10 years of constant improvements to our Model E karts would measure up well, we wouldn't know until we put them head-to-head with the competition. Here were the results:

Within ten minutes of the "Test Drive" event starting, the European kart manufacturers were complaining that Amusement Products karts had an unfair advantage as they "can't go that fast!"

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High Caliber asked us to slow our karts down to match the competitor's top speed to give attendees an "apple to apple" comparison. Apparently, the Europeans cannot get their karts to go as fast as the Model E was set. After slowing them down from 30 mph (not its top speed) to 24 mph to match the other competitor's top speed, the Model E still left all other karts in the dust with its superior acceleration out of the turns. Furthermore, many racers commented on how well the karts hugged the turns and held the racing line with steering that was much easier to turn than the competition!

In addition, the LED light show on our karts completely outshone the competition (see video link). When I spoke with Ben, High Caliber's head of maintenance, on Wednesday morning, he told me that the HCK team had raced all the karts after the attendees left—and unanimously agreed the Model E was the most fun to drive. Even at 24 mph, its handling and takeoff were far more responsive than the competitors' karts. He also said the LED light show blended perfectly with the LED lighting around the track. Jordan and his HCK team truly outdid themselves with the lighting setup—I counted nine different LED-highlighted areas in the bar alone! With Amusement Products putting interactive LEDs on all our rides, we firmly believe in "WOWING" customers with immersive lighting.

One of the main reasons I told Jordan we wanted to attend was to get his personal feedback on how the Model E performed. Good, bad, or ugly—we wanted the truth. Jordan was initially skeptical that a non-racing manufacturer could build anything that could match up to racing karts, especially European heavyweights like Tony Kart and OTL, who both had models at the show. But with over 53 years of go-kart manufacturing experience, we were confident we could match the power and speed—but how about the handling?

As the show's master of ceremonies, Jordan didn't get to race our kart during the event. Anxious to get his opinion, we had the AP crew stay long after the show ended to give him the chance. I must admit—I was nervous, even after all the positive feedback from attendees and the HCK staff.

Jordan grabbed his personal racing helmet—the same one he uses when racing motorcycles—and took the Model E out for a test run.

While most previous drivers had been a bit timid, Jordan raced like a pro. If we had been timing laps, I'm sure he would've had the fastest time of the day! He carved the racing line like no one else had. In hindsight, I wish we had bumped the speed back to 30 mph just to see what he could really do, but we kept it at 24 mph to maintain a fair comparison with the other karts.

After five or six minutes, Jordan pulled into the pit, ripped off his helmet, and shouted:

"That kart sticks to the racing line like no other kart. You've made America proud! I have to give you a hug!"

And then he did—he jumped out and gave me a hug.

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I have to say, that was one of my proudest moments as a manufacturer. The kart Jordan rode came straight off the assembly line and will be placed at an indoor track this May. No special treatment—just our standard assembly and settings.

A decade of design, redesign, and fine-tuning had finally proven itself in performance. We achieved that using standard extended-wear 6" x 3.50" x 5" tires and caster settings optimized not just for racers, but for ages six and up. With our custom steering, motor, lithium battery design, and versatile chassis, Amusement Products has now proven we not only offer the most sophisticated operating system but the best performance too.

And that's without even using our Power Up Karting operating system—wait until they see how game-changing that really is!

Our sincere thanks to Jordan, Zach, and Casey for allowing us to be part of the show and demonstrate to attendees that we offer not only the most durable kart in the world—but also the best performing!

## **Epilogue:**

On the way back to Chattanooga, two of our team members stopped by a multi-elevation track in Detroit. Built the previous year at a cost of \$3,000,000, the track is a great example of what can happen when operators in large markets pair the right facility with the right attraction. They increased their revenue by over \$5,000,000 with their amazing new Coaster Track.

Before we arrived, the owner didn't think electric go-karts could handle the climb. Not only did they handle it—they also went up the downhill section, over 200 feet long with a 15+ degree incline! Their gas karts run at 16.5 mph because they hit over 25 mph going down that drop. With features like remote-controlled reverse and forward, a track that normally requires eight people to run can now be operated with just one or two staff members. There is no need to station attendants all over the track thanks to our advanced electric kart operating system.

Their team was blown away by the performance of our ThunderVolt operating system. We even showed off a little by remotely operating the Model E in reverse 75 feet into the pit.

We have ultimate control over our karts with our cutting-edge systems.

For more information on how your track can dominate the market, contact our expert sales staff at: [info@amusementproducts.com](mailto:info@amusementproducts.com)