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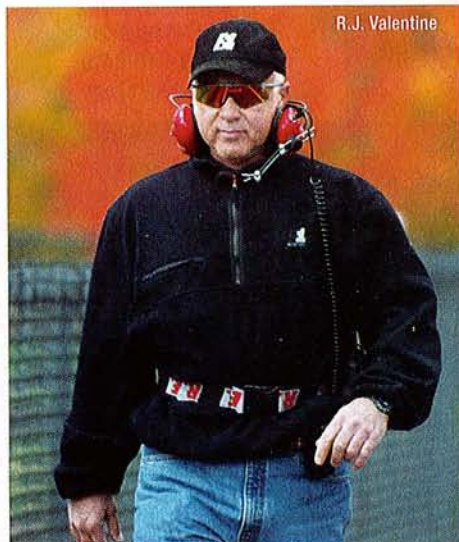
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KISS THIS

the New K.I.S.S. Barrier's Keep Drivers & Spectators Safe...
And Look Good Doing It.

National Kart News recently caught up with Richard "RJ" Valentine, President and CEO of KISS Barriers, to learn about barrier design and his involvement in karting. Based in Braintree, Mass., Valentine also owns and operates several karting-related businesses. He operates F1 Boston, a 106,000 sq. ft. indoor kart facility and conference center. According to Valentine, F1 Boston has hosted events for more than 6,000 businesses, as well as serving countless individuals and year-round league racers.



R.J. Valentine

Valentine also operates F1 Outdoors, a state-of-the-art kart racing complex featuring 1.5-mile track with hairpin turns, banked turns and straight-aways all in a beautifully-landscaped "Country Club" setting. He's also a principal of New Jersey Motorsports Park, a 700-acre Motorsports lifestyle complex located in Millville, New Jersey. The complex features 2 world-class road courses, as well as F1 New Jersey Karting Center, a 1 mile-plus layout featuring multiple track configurations.

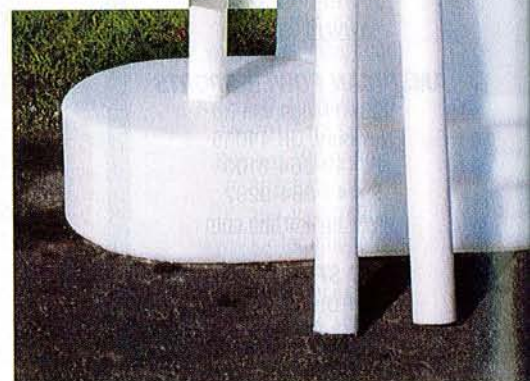
Valentine is the co-founder Championship Karting International (CKI), a WKA-sanctioned national kart championship series. Launched this year, the 2010 CKI season will offer a 6-event schedule, beginning at Palm Beach International Raceway in March. He also owns SSC East, the direct importer for leading kart products including Rotax/Bombardier, CRG chassis, Maxter engines and Zanardi Karts to both dealers and racers.

Here are some of the insights Valentine was willing to share with us about the karting business and barrier technology.

What inspired you to develop your own barriers?

We were looking for a better solution for our tracks – the barriers that were available just weren't good enough. I was at a boat show in Florida looking at all the big, luxurious yachts. I was impressed with the bumper systems used to protect these big boats when docking and thought the same design principles would work for us.

I met with the manufacturer of the boat bumpers and pitched him on my vision of applying the same technology and design principles to karting



barriers. He was inspired and we went to work designing the KISS Barrier System and the rest, as they say, is history.

How is the KISS Barrier system different than others?

As I mentioned before, we were using existing barriers at our kart complexes, but weren't happy with several key factors. First, we found them very difficult and time-consuming to set up or replace. Crashes are an inevitable part of racing, and barriers from time to time break and need replacing.

The barriers we were using had a strap that ran through the entire 'string' of barriers to keep them connected. The problem: when one of the barriers breaks, you must dismantle the whole string to replace it. The process is quite time-consuming – forcing us to shut down the entire track for an extended period of time. Not only is this disruptive for our competitors, but it also translates into lost revenue.

Plus, we are always changing track configurations to offer our competitors different types of action to enhance their racing experience. It used to take hours to move the barriers around. Now, it's done in minutes.

So timing is a big issue, what is it that makes KISS Barriers easier and faster to assemble or replace?

Well, without getting too technical, the KISS system uses a pivotal pin system at the ends of each barrier that interconnects the barriers together. The barriers have a 'tongue and groove' design where the pins secure them together. To replace, a track worker simply pulls the pin and switches out the damaged barrier with a new one and puts the pins back in place – it's that simple.

We also have an anchoring system where long PVC tubes replace the short interlocking pins at specified intervals – typically every fourth pin, depending on the track configuration. The longer tubes are anchored into the track surface to keep the barriers securely in place.



What other differences have you designed into the KISS Barrier?

Making the barriers easier to replace is good – but making them tougher and stronger, so you don't have to replace them as often is even better!! So we worked to improve the durability. Instead of a traditional flat surface design, KISS Barriers employs a series of 'Impact Ridges' on each side making the barrier less vulnerable to damage. This is important, especially with concession karts which have surround wrap bumpers – great for kart and driver protection, but especially tough on barriers. The Impact Ridges do a much better job dispersing energy – this design significantly reduces the amount of damage caused at impact. It's just a better mouse trap. We're currently testing new materials to develop an even softer barrier – it'll be like hitting a pillow!

We also designed a ballast system into the barriers so the weight can be increased or decreased for specific applications; the barriers can be easily customized to accommodate any track configuration. The barriers have fill and drain plugs, where water or sand can be added to weigh the barriers down. So it's easy to make them heavier for high impact areas and places where extra protection is necessary for track worker safety, and lighter for run-off areas letting drivers shed speed gradually and avoid damaging the kart.

So flexibility is important?

Absolutely, with the pivotal pin and the ballast systems, we can use the same set of barriers for many different applications. For example, we run off-site races every season – mostly charity events in parking lots and on-street competitions. These are great events that raise money for important, worthy causes. The KISS Barriers help make it possible to run these events – we pull the barriers off one of our permanent tracks quickly, transport to the temporary site, set them up fast, adjust the ballast and run the race. Then quickly dismantle and get them back to our facility without too much time or effort, and minimum disruption to the location of the temporary course. We could never have done that with the other systems out there.

Also, because the KISS Barriers are so easy to set-up and break down, existing race car complexes use them to hold kart competitions on their tracks and need to set-up temporary tracks. It's an exciting, different experience for their competitors, and a great revenue source for the tracks. 



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