Proposed Off-Grid Smart Keg System for Events

Based on our earlier chat about jockey box alternatives, this builds toward a portable, self-pour setup that's more efficient and guest-friendly: an integrated kegerator base with RFID-enabled taps for app-controlled pours (tracking volume, payments, and inventory in real-time), all running off a battery-powered Starlink Mini for remote connectivity. No exact off-the-shelf product matches this 100% (self-pour tech like iPourIt is mostly fixed-install), but a hybrid of proven components gets you there affordably—think $2,500–$5,000 startup, scalable to 4–8 taps for 50–200 guests.

It's "better" than a jockey box by eliminating ice churn (passive insulation + mini-kegs), enabling cashless self-service (boosts upsell 20–30% per industry data), and providing remote monitoring via app (e.g., low-keg alerts). Power draw stays low (~100W total), so a mid-size battery lasts 4–8 hours per event, rechargeable via solar for multi-day gigs.

I'll break this into key components first, then setup steps. We can drill into one area if you want (e.g., "Tell me more about power math").

1. Dispensing Hardware: Portable Kegerator Base

Go with a self-contained unit holding 2–4 mini-kegs (2–5 gallons each) for easy transport—no separate keg hauling like jockey boxes. Top pick: **Cooler Keg Draft System** (dual-tap, holds ~3.5 gallons total, 24-hour passive chill via insulation/ice packs). It's rugged for events, weighs 35 lbs empty, and supports CO2 cartridges for pressure.

- **Why better?** Cleaner pours, no line coiling; add taps for self-service.
- **Link & Cost:** Cooler Keg on Amazon – $1,200 (includes 4 CO2 cartridges).
- Alternative: **ColdOne X2** for longer chill (5 days) – Coldbreak USA – $1,000.

Upgrade with flow-control valves (~$50/tap) for consistent foam.

2. Control System: iPourIt-Style Self-Pour Tech

iPourIt isn't natively portable, but their kiosks are "plug-and-pour" (modular for events),

and you can adapt valves/RFID for a mobile wall. Guests tap an RFID wristband/card/app to unlock pours; system tracks ounces poured, charges cards, and syncs inventory to cloud. PourMyBeer is a close rival with similar RFID/QR but easier mobile integration.

- **Key Features:** Real-time dashboard (via app/browser) for pour data, keg levels, and pricing (e.g., happy hour auto-discounts). Mobile app (iPourIt's 2021 update) enables contactless activation without hardware touch.
- **Power Needs:** Low—PoE (5–15W/tap via Ethernet cable from a central hub); total for 4 taps ~40W. Runs on DC from battery.
- **Integration:** Mount taps on the kegerator; connect flowmeters in lines. iPourIt supports "benching" kegs for transport.
- **Link & Cost:** iPourIt Starter Kit (4 taps) – Quote ~$1,500–$2,500 (contact for portable config). Or PourMyBeer System – ~$2,000, with 3-year warranty.
- **DIY Angle:** If custom, add Raspberry Pi (~$50) for basic flow tracking, but pro kits avoid hacks.

3. Power & Connectivity: Battery + Starlink Mini

Starlink Mini provides 50–100Mbps internet for app sync (e.g., remote sales reports) in remote spots. Pair with a portable station for full off-grid.

- **Starlink Specs:** 20–40W draw (15W idle); needs 100W USB-PD input.
- **Battery Pick: EcoFlow River 2** (256Wh, 300W output)—runs Starlink + taps for ~4 hours; add a 100W solar panel ($100) for recharges. Total draw: Starlink (30W avg) + taps (40W) + misc (LEDs/fans 20W) = ~90W.
- **Runtime Math:** 256Wh / 90W = ~2.8 hours full load; stretch to 6–8 hours with idle/low use. Scale to Bluetti AC200 (2kWh) for all-day events (~$1,000).
- **Link & Cost:** Starlink Mini Kit – $599 (plus $50/mo service). EcoFlow River 2 – $239. PeakDo Power Bank (dedicated Starlink) – $150 for 4–5 hours standalone.

Setup Steps

We'll go one at a time—start with hardware assembly, then test pours, power up, and

deploy. Probe me on Step 1 if ready.

Step 1: Assemble the Base Unit

- Unbox Cooler Keg; insert mini-kegs (pre-chilled/carbonated).
- Mount 2–4 taps on the lid (drill if needed, or use adhesive brackets—$20).
- Run CO2 lines from cartridges (inside unit) to kegs; add flowmeters/valves per iPourIt kit instructions (inline on beer lines, ~2-ft tubing).
- Test manual pour: Should dispense 1 oz/test with minimal foam (adjust pressure to 10–12 PSI). Time: 1–2 hours. Tools: Basic (screwdriver, tubing cutter).

(Next steps on request: Wiring controls, battery hookup, app config, event rollout.)

This setup pays off fast—self-pour cuts labor 50%, ups revenue via tracked upsells. For parties, theme it (e.g., branded wristbands). Questions on costs, scaling, or alternatives?

↳ Detailed power runtime math

↳ RFID wristband alternatives