

= Thunder Run (Kentucky Kingdom) =

Thunder Run is a wooden roller coaster at the Kentucky Kingdom amusement park in Louisville , Kentucky . The ride originally operated from August 1990 through to October 2009 , when then @-@ operators Six Flags abandoned the park . After remaining standing but not operating since 2009 , Thunder Run reopened in May 2014 when Kentucky Kingdom reopened under new operators .

The ride was manufactured by Dinn Corporation and designed by Curtis D. Summers and John Fetterman . With 2 @, @ 850 feet (870 m) of track , Thunder Run stands 90 feet (27 m) tall and features a top speed of 53 miles per hour (85 km / h) .

= = History = =

Kentucky Kingdom opened on May 23 , 1987 , leasing 10 acres (4 @. @ 0 ha) at the Kentucky Exposition Center property . The Texas investors who operated the park filed it for bankruptcy after only one season of operation . The Ed Hart @-@ led Themeparks LLC firm purchased the rights to operate the park in 1989 , reopening the park the following year . As part of the reopening the new operators added a collection of new rides including Thunder Run , which opened in August 1990 . Early in Thunder Run 's operating life , its train had derailed from the lift hill and the ride 's lap bars were found to be unsafe . No injuries were reported from either incident . The original ride was retracked by Martin & Vleminckx prior to its closure in 2009 .

Thunder Run operated until the end of the 2009 season on November 1 . Amid a corporate bankruptcy , on February 4 , 2010 , Six Flags announced the park would cease operations immediately due to the rejection of an amended lease by the Kentucky State Fair Board . Many attempts were made to reopen the park under new operators . Eventually , on June 27 , 2013 , a group of investors led by Ed Hart negotiated an agreement to reopen the park . The group would spend \$ 36 million to reopen the park in May 2014 . Thunder Run would be part of the opening day lineup of attractions . Rocky Mountain Construction was hired to refurbish the ride , resulting in the existing wooden track to be replaced . On October 10 , 2013 , Kentucky Kingdom invited members of the media and amusement industry to ride the refurbished Thunder Run . The ride reopened to the public on May 24 , 2014 .

= = Characteristics = =

The 2 @, @ 850 @-@ foot @-@ long (870 m) Thunder Run stands 90 feet (27 m) tall . With a top speed of 53 miles per hour (85 km / h) , the ride featured a ride duration of approximately 2 minutes . The ride would operate with a single train featuring six cars . Each would seat riders in two rows of two , totalling 24 riders per train . Thunder Run features 70 degree banked turns .

Thunder Run 's design was originally intended for Americana Amusement Park in the late 1980s ; Dinn Corporation was contracted to manufacturer a wooden roller coaster designed by Curtis D. Summers and John Fetterman , before the plans fell through . The design was later used as the foundation for International Coasters ' only two roller coasters which are located at Carowinds and Kings Dominion , both named the Hurler .

= = Ride experience = =

Thunder Run features a double out and back layout . It begins with a left turn out of the station . This leads to the 90 @-@ foot @-@ tall (27 m) chain lift hill . Once at the top , riders go down a small dip and along a 180 degree turn to the left . The first drop of 74 feet (23 m) leads into a near @-@ ground level 70 @-@ degree banked turn to the left . A series of small camelback hills are followed by a turnaround . The train proceeds back towards the station with another hill . This process repeats a second time leading back into the brake run and station .

= = Reception = =

In 1993 and 1994 , Thunder Run was cited by Amusement Business as the " Most Terrifying Roller Coaster " on a top 10 list . The American Coaster Enthusiasts ' Inside Track magazine ranked Thunder Run as the " fourth best of its kind in the nation " . In 2007 , the Lexington Herald @-@ Leader described the ride as having " a few nice drops and that jerky , clicking wooden coaster feel that some people love , but it never gets too wild " . Tim O 'Brien , formerly of Amusement Business , rode the inaugural run of the ride in 1990 , as well as the first cycle of the refurbished ride in 2013 . O 'Brien describes the updated ride as " a better ride today than it was back then " , commending the ride 's ability to give a classic wooden roller coaster feel , yet run smoothly . He states Thunder Run " is one of the top wooden roller coasters in the world " .

In Amusement Today 's annual Golden Ticket Awards , Thunder Run has appeared four times from 2001 through to 2004 . It debuted at position 34 in 2001 before dropping to 49 in 2004 .

Mitch Hawker 's worldwide Best Roller Coaster Poll is an annual survey of roller coasters from around the world . It is widely regarded as the best and most accurate of any roller coaster poll available due to its ranking algorithm which prevents the poll from becoming a popularity contest . In the poll , Thunder Run entered at position 30 in 1994 , maintaining an average of 54 for the 17 years that followed . The ride 's ranking in subsequent polls is shown in the table below .