

= GateKeeper (roller coaster) =

GateKeeper is a steel roller coaster located at Cedar Point in Sandusky , Ohio . Designed by Bolliger & Mabillard (B & M) , it was the fifth Wing Coaster installation in the world . The ride opened on May 11 , 2013 , on the most successful opening weekend to date in the park 's history . GateKeeper features the highest inversion in the world , with its 170 @-@ foot (52 m) Wing Over drop . It has broken several Wing Coaster records , including those for height , speed , track length , drop height and number of inversions . The coaster has a 170 ft (52 m) , 40 @-@ degree inclined lift hill with a 164 ft (50 m) drop and features two support towers with keyhole elements that the trains travel through . Its top speed is approximately 67 mph (108 km / h) .

Construction began in September 2012 and took roughly eight months to complete . The park built a new entrance plaza featuring the keyhole towers as the centerpiece . The roller coaster replaced Disaster Transport and Space Spiral , both demolished during the summer of 2012 , bringing Cedar Point back to its former total of 16 roller coasters . It was Cedar Point 's first new roller coaster since Maverick debuted in 2007 , and the third B & M coaster in the park following Raptor (1994) and Mantis (1996) . In 2013 , GateKeeper was the most frequently @-@ ridden roller coaster at Cedar Point , and it ranked 28th among steel roller coasters in the annual Golden Ticket Awards poll from Amusement Today .

= = History = =

Discussions about a new roller coaster began under former Cedar Fair CEO Dick Kinzel in 2011 , who credits his successor Matt Ouimet with the project . The first concept of GateKeeper was created at the 2011 International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA) Expo . On April 24 , 2012 , Ouimet said at an Erie County Chamber of Commerce meeting that there would be \$ 25 million in capital expenditures for Cedar Point in 2013 . On May 30 , 2012 , the Sandusky Register reported that a memo written by Ouimet to Cedar Fair 's board of directors on February 15 , 2012 , stated that a new Wing Coaster code @-@ named " CP Alt . Winged " would be introduced in 2013 . It also mentioned that the new coaster would set Wing Coaster records for drop , speed , and length , and that it would have a " Front Gate Statement " explained as a strong presence at the entrance to the park . In addition to traveling over the front entrance , part of the track would also cross over portions of the parking lot . Details claimed the ride would be 170 feet (52 m) high , and that both Disaster Transport and Space Spiral would need to be removed to accommodate the new attraction .

As part of Gatekeeper 's marketing campaign , Cedar Point released several teasers on their " OnPoint " blog . Posters scattered throughout the park and on Cedar Point 's website included taglines such as , " How do you recover from a Disaster ? " , " WildCat is no match for this creature " and " Not even a Jumbo Jet soars like this ! " Each poster had a black background with five blue wings , hinting at the ride 's logo . Annie Zelm , a marketing representative for the park , stated that some of the clues on the website were intended to mislead readers . On August 3 , 2012 , Cedar Point launched a countdown clock on their Facebook page , letting the public know when the next major announcement was scheduled . The page said , " We can 't keep it locked away much longer ... Join us outside the Main Gate at 3 : 30 pm on August 13 , where all we 've kept hidden will be set free ! " .

On August 13 , 2012 , Cedar Point officially announced GateKeeper with specifications that confirmed the report leaked earlier by Sandusky Register ? a 170 @-@ foot @-@ tall (52 m) Wing Coaster that would be manufactured by B & M . The announcement included a Halloween Haunt @-@ like creature speaking to guests atop the main gate at the park 's main entrance . A trademark application was filed for the name GateKeeper the same day . Rob Decker said , " GateKeeper is truly an innovation in thrills . Every twist , turn and near @-@ miss element was created exclusively for Cedar Point . "

In its first complete test , the roller coaster completed its first full @-@ circuit ride on April 4 , 2013 . Hundreds of tests were conducted prior to inspections and approval for operation . On April 10 ,

Cedar Point launched an online auction in which bidders could bid to become one of the first 64 people to ride GateKeeper after it opened to the public . The Cleveland Clinic Children ' s Hospital and United Way of Erie County each had 32 seats available in separate auctions , and proceeds were shared between the organizations . Media day for GateKeeper was held on May 9 , and the ride debuted to the public on opening day , May 11 .

= = = Construction = = =

On July 13 , 2012 , Cedar Point announced the closure of Disaster Transport and Space Spiral . Disaster Transport closed on July 29 , 2012 and dismantling began on August 6 , starting in the back of the building . Space Spiral was demolished on September 12 , 2012 by imploding the base and letting the tower fall towards the beach . Construction of GateKeeper started in mid @-@ September and the first footers were poured on October 2 . Approximately 200 footers were dug , each about 6 feet (1 @.@ 8 m) deep . The first pieces of track were delivered on October 23 and the installation of the track and supports , starting with the station , began on November 5 . The lift hill was topped off on November 30 . A construction update on January 7 , 2013 , said that approximately 40 % of the ride 's structure , including the Wing Over Drop , Immelmann and Camelback elements , had been completed . The first pieces of the two keyhole towers arrived on January 23 , and the first keyhole tower was erected on January 29 . On February 27 , 2013 , at approximately 2 pm , the final piece of GateKeeper was put in place about two weeks ahead of schedule .

Building the coaster took about eight months , and nearly 100 workers from four engineering companies worked on the project . Sherrod Brown , a United States Senator from Ohio , praised Cedar Point for using local companies for the job . A.A. Boos & Sons did the groundwork , including the footers and cement pouring . Tony Ravagnani Architects designed , engineered and installed the two keyhole towers . The electrical work , including the lighting , was done by Firelands Electric . The station and gift shop were built by Bert Witte Contractors , S.A. Comunal installed the plumbing and air systems and Lew ' s Construction built the park 's new entrance plaza . About 12 million pounds (5 @,@ 400 @,@ 000 kilograms) of concrete was used for the ride .

= = Ride experience = =

= = = Entrance and queue = = =

GateKeeper 's entrance plaza is located along the beach next to one of Wicked Twister 's towers . A sculpture with the GateKeeper logo is in the center of the plaza . The queue runs parallel to the beach , under the lift hill and station . Once under the station , riders can choose which side of the train they would like to ride . GateKeeper uses the Fast Lane queuing system ; visitors can buy a wristband that allows them to wait in a short line .

= = = Layout = = =

After leaving the station , the train turns 180 degrees to the right , then begins to climb the chain lift hill at 40 degrees . Once the train reaches the top of the 170 @-@ foot (52 m) lift , it enters the first element called the " Wing Over Drop " . The train rotates 180 degrees before descending 164 feet (50 m) in a half loop . During this drop , the train reaches 67 miles per hour (108 km / h) ? its maximum speed ? and riders experience about 4 Gs . After leaving the first drop , the train immediately enters an Immelmann loop almost directly under the lift hill . After the loop , the train turns right into the only camelback hill , which is 105 feet (32 m) high . Riders experience about two seconds of weightlessness on the hill . Next , the train goes through a giant flat spin , followed by a zero @-@ g roll which features two keyhole points as it passes through two 100 @-@ foot (30 m) -tall towers . The train then returns to the ground and goes through an inclined dive loop , which is

the turn @-@ around point of the roller coaster . Next , the train rotates 360 degrees in an inline twist , which passes the two towers . The train then turns slightly left before entering the mid @-@ course brake run . The train drops to the ground before ascending again and enters a 360 @-@ degree downward helix . The train then traverses a small hill before turning left into the final brake run which leads back to the station .

= = Characteristics = =

= = = Location = = =

GateKeeper 's entrance and station are located near Wicked Twister , Troika and maXair . The ride covers 3 @.@ 5 acres (1 @.@ 4 ha) ; it initially runs parallel to Lake Erie then travels through the parking lot , over the main entrance then turns around in front of Blue Streak . As it passes through the main entrance plaza , it passes through two 100 @-@ foot (30 m) -tall towers that form Cedar Point 's entrance gates .

= = = Manufacturer = = =

GateKeeper is a Wing Coaster model manufactured by Swiss roller coaster firm Bolliger & Mabillard . It is Cedar Point 's third B & M roller coaster ; the park also has Raptor , an inverted roller coaster , and Rougarou , a floorless roller coaster . GateKeeper was the fifth Wing Coaster in the world and the third one built in the United States following X @-@ Flight at Six Flags Great America and Wild Eagle at Dollywood .

= = = Trains = = =

GateKeeper operates with three open @-@ air steel and fiberglass trains , each with eight cars of four seats each , with two on each side of the track . Each train holds 32 riders and the ride has a capacity of about 1 @, @ 710 riders per hour . Riders are restrained by flexible over @-@ the @-@ shoulder restraints and interlocking seat belts and riders are required to be between 52 inches (130 cm) and 78 inches (200 cm) to ride . Because the seats are on the side of the track , a cantilevered steel arm is used to support the wings . The trains are painted Sunset Gold with Zenith , Meteor , and Orion Gold accents . The fourth row of each train has extendable harnesses enabling large passengers to ride . The front of each train is shaped to resemble the head of a griffin . The griffin 's eyes and the outside seats of each row incorporate LED lighting , a first for a roller coaster at Cedar Point . The LED lights on the trains recharge while the trains are in the station .

= = = Track = = =

GateKeeper 's tubular steel track is 4 @, @ 164 feet (1 @, @ 269 m) long and the lift is approximately 170 feet (52 m) high . The track is Azure Blue (dark blue) and Strata Blue (light blue) , and the supports are white . There are 102 track pieces , each weighing approximately 7 @, @ 500 pounds (3 @, @ 400 kg) . Unlike Raptor and Rougarou , the track and supports are filled with sand to reduce the noise as the ride traverses the main entrance . The track and supports were manufactured by Clermont Steel Fabricators in Batavia in southwest Ohio .

Clermont also manufactured the two keyhole towers . Each tower is 100 feet (30 m) tall ; 25 feet (7 @.@ 6 m) is the concrete foundation and 75 feet (23 m) is steel . At the Great Ohio Coaster Club holiday tour , Ed Dangler ? Cedar Point ? s Director of Maintenance and New Construction ? stated the original plan was to have the towers ' supports encased by an outer shell ; however , Cedar Point went back to B & M , and decided to build a steel structure to serve as the keyhole element and the supports . Each half of the tower weighs about 65 @, @ 000 pounds (29 @, @ 000 kg) .

== Records ==

GateKeeper broke several world records . Among Wing Coasters , it became the longest and fastest , featured the longest drop , and contained the most inversions . It also set a new record for highest inversion of any roller coaster in the world , surpassing Volcano , The Blast Coaster at Cedar Point 's sister park , Kings Dominion .

== Reception ==

GateKeeper has received mostly positive reviews from the media and public . Some riders complained about the shoulder restraints becoming too tight while sitting in the brake run at the end of the ride . Others praised the near @-@ miss elements ; one woman said , " It feels like you 're going to get your knees chopped off and your head chopped off . " Many guests also praised the smoothness of the ride and how the renovated main entrance is very appealing . On GateKeeper 's opening weekend , Cedar Point achieved its most successful opening weekend in the history of the park , due to the popularity of GateKeeper .

On July 17 , 2013 , GateKeeper 's millionth rider received \$ 500 to spend at the park , a VIP tour of the park and exclusive access to GateKeeper for the rest of the 2013 season . The park 's spokesman Bryan Edwards said , " We are giving approximately 1 @,@ 600 rides per hour . It has definitely been a huge success for the park . Our guests love GateKeeper . " It finished the season with just over 2 @.@ 1 million riders , the most of any ride in 2013 . GateKeeper also helped Cedar Fair to achieve record revenue , record attendance , record distribution and record stock pricing in 2013 .

=== Awards ===

In 2013 , GateKeeper ranked third in Amusement Today 's Golden Ticket Award for Best New Ride behind Outlaw Run at Silver Dollar City and Iron Rattler at Six Flags Fiesta Texas . It also debuted 28th on the list for Top Steel Roller Coasters , making it the first time ever that Cedar Point had six steel roller coasters in the top 50 .