What Time Is It? It’s Ticket Time!

Smart Debuts New RFID Card-Swipe Model of Popular Crane

Operators aren’t in the habit of hyping earnings on games, so when one after another reports phenomenal collections on something, you have to pay attention. That’s what’s going on with Smart Industries’ Ticket Time crane, the brightly LED-illuminated crane where players win ticket bundles. Now the factory is coming out with a new, self-contained RFID unit that works with swipe cards so that locations and players don’t have the ticket hassles.

Smart’s Sales VP Jim Dupree said, “What we’re doing with the machine is taking it to the next level. With the new swipe card/RFID version of Ticket Time, called Ticket-Smarts, the crane will read the tickets bundles the player wins but not dispense them, which has been a challenge ticket cranes have had until now. Instead, the ticket values are recorded automatically on the player’s card.”

Owner Jeff Smart, Jim Dupree and the Smart team will have Ticket-Smarts at IAAPA; shipping will start within a couple of weeks following the Expo. It will be available in 31” single and 61” double sizes (a 45” model is to come later). The original Ticket Time is also still available new in 31”, double and 45” models.

But wait, there’s more: Smart has created another model that will “make Ticket Time the complete package.” Said Jim, “We’re putting a pusher inside the machine so as the game is played, tickets get pushed down onto a platform and can be dropped into the winnings. This absolutely adds another level of player excitement.” Smart will also show this crane in Orlando and units will ship in December. (Dupree expects they’ll build both regular and RFID models of this pusher version of Ticket Time.)

Praise for RFID

Clarence Mabe of S&M Amusements in Gray, Tenn., has been testing the new Ticket-Smarts with RFID for a few months and told RePlay: “First of all, we love the Ticket Time crane, but we also felt we needed something that didn’t dispense actual tickets and instead kept track of the winnings on a player card. Jim Dupree and Jeff Smart got a unit to us to test and it’s done as well as the original Ticket Time without the hassles of dealing with tickets, dispensing, counting, and so on. In our game room, we run without tickets so this was big. Honestly, the players like not having to carry the tickets around and deal with them at the counter.”

Mabe continued, “In the three months of testing, we’ve had no problem with the RFID nor any problems with the game mechanically. The RFID system is reading all of the ticket bundles accurately even if it picks up more than one.”

Tale of Ticket Time

The story of reliability and strong earnings of Ticket Time has been growing since the company introduced the game in November of 2015. Dupree said, “Between November and June of this year, it became the hottest thing in the industry. I’m not just saying that because it’s our machine. It really did become the best-priced, best-earning machine in the business. It’s hot cakes and that’s good for the industry and good for us.”

Jim recounted an unsolicited call he received from an operator, who had phoned in to get some help since it seemed his customers were actually taking the ticket bundles they’d won home instead of redeeming them. “In talking about that, the operator told me that his 31” Ticket Time did $13,000 in the first month! That’s insane! He then bought a double and in the first week, it earned $5,000.”

Jim said, “What it’s doing in the marketplace is just unbelievable. This game has meant a lot to people; it’s put money in their pockets. A guy from the south called me who’d been in the
“It is by far the best game of 2016 without question,” said Clarence Mabe. “Just stop and think about it. It costs $6,000 or $7,000 and you can make that back in one week. It will make as much as a Big Bass Wheel and Monster Drop which cost a lot more; and this game holds its own against six-player pushers and other more expensive machines. This is the best ROI on a machine I’ve ever seen in my career. Back when plush cranes first hit the market you might see these kinds of numbers, but this is the best since. This is a no brainer.”

Mabe also has high expectations for the pusher version, predicting that earnings will be even higher. “I’ll tell you why,” he said. “With Ticket Time, you don’t pick up tickets every time, but with the pusher, the player will win 80-100% of the time. Players will get the thrill of winning and satisfaction will be even greater and that drives play. I believe you can have both kinds in the arcade at one time and they’ll come in #1 and #2 in the same location. Out of all the machines in our Rockin’ Raceway location (Pigeon Forge, Tenn.) Ticket-Smarts with the RFID system is #1 and the standard model without RFID is #2.

“I think the RFID model will be the next great machine,” Mabe continued. “I have a lot of friends who won’t buy Ticket Time because it only gives out tickets, but once they see you can get it with the card swipe version without tickets, I guarantee they’ll buy one for every location.”

Marc Wiese of Airway Fun Center Portage, Mich. (sister cities with Kalamzoo), said, “I bought a single Ticket Time 10 weeks ago and it’s been #1 in the room ever since. It paid for itself in a week!”

He then bought a double Ticket Time for his bowling entertainment center and said that those three crane bays “occupy the top three spots in my game room of 55 pieces and bring in 20% of the revenue. They also haven’t cannibalized the rest of the game room. Earnings on all the other pieces are still up where they should be.”

Wiese admitted, “The numbers are nuts. For the money, it’s the best game we’ve ever bought by far, by far, by far. It’s also been incredibly reliable: We haven’t had any problems with it at all.”

David Boothroyd, Head Technician at The Funplex North, said, “We’ve been operating Ticket Time Double Crane for just about a month now and couldn’t be happier. This crane has brought in over 8% of our total arcade revenue during all four weeks. (We’re operating it as a play-until-you-win crane for $3 a play.)”

He continued, “It is by far the brightest game on the floor both literally and in our game activity reports. To put it into perspective, last week it did 8.06 percent and the next best game is a six-sided late model pusher, which did 3.59 percent. The next best crane did 2.98 percent. Ticket Time literally paid for itself in one week.

“I have been working for the Funplex for two years, and in the Industry for 17, and I’m in awe of the Ticket Time crane. It makes so much money I had to test it to make sure it wasn’t broken.”

Testimonials like that are hard to beat. To learn more about Ticket Time and the new models, visit the Smart Industries booth at IAAPA (# 2015) or online at www.smartind.com.