

Marble Racing Proposal

The Pitch:

In a nutshell, the Anchor Boat Club is a member-driven, non-profit social organization with a proud history spanning nearly 80 years on Lake Springfield.

Today, our membership is more than 140 strong. However, approximately 40% of our members have earned honorary status through their years of dedication and service. As a token of appreciation, honorary members are exempt from paying annual membership dues, which currently represents more than \$12,000 in waived revenue each year.

For the record, I wholeheartedly support recognizing the loyalty and contributions of our honorary members—they've helped build the club into what it is today. At the same time, this reality places greater importance on the success of our fundraising events and other revenue-generating activities. As a non-profit organization, finding that balance can sometimes be challenging.

For the club to remain healthy and continue growing, we need to do two things well: create events that encourage people to visit the club and develop opportunities that attract new members.

With that in mind, I started brainstorming ideas for events that could accomplish both goals. While browsing social media one evening, I happened across a video featuring what could best be described as **marble racing**. It immediately caught my attention. The concept reminded me of the duck races we held during the Cardboard Boat Regatta recently—an event that seemed to be well-received by participants and spectators of all ages.

That sparked an idea: if our duck races generated excitement and brought people together from all ages, perhaps a marble racing event could do the same.

The more I thought about it, the more potential I saw. I began weighing the advantages and challenges of hosting a marble racing event, and with each consideration, it seemed not only practical but like a unique opportunity for the Anchor Boat Club to offer something different—an event that is affordable, family-friendly, and capable of generating both community interest and revenue.

Therefore, I respectfully ask to consider and discuss this proposal as a potential new revenue-generating opportunity. In addition to creating an additional income stream for the club, this event has the potential to attract new members, increase member engagement, and encourage greater use of our facilities throughout the year.

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Objective:

As part of our ongoing efforts to introduce new and engaging activities that attract current members, prospective members, and especially younger generations, I would like to propose Marble Racing as a new event for the Anchor Boat Club.

Marble Racing offers a unique, entertaining, and highly customizable experience that appeals to participants of all ages. Events can be tailored to fit a variety of goals, including charitable fundraisers, family-friendly gatherings, or competitive tournament-style competitions. With its broad appeal, low operating costs, and exciting spectator experience, Marble Racing has the potential to become a signature event that helps increase club participation, strengthen community engagement, and attract new membership.



What does it look like?

Sample 1: <https://youtube.com/shorts/goudgl4SGE?si=4cb37liQuvw8VI-0>

Sample 2: <https://www.tiktok.com/@cactus.canyon.marblerace/video/7478820159747214638>

Sample 3: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qz927SnGfnk>



Race Formats:

Single Elimination

- Lose once and you're out.
- Fastest format.
- Great for large crowds.

Double Elimination

- Players must lose twice before elimination.
- More forgiving and popular.

Round Robin

- Every marble races multiple times.
- Best overall record wins.
- Good for smaller groups.

Heat Racing

Example:

- 48 marbles
- 8 heats of 6 marbles
- Top 3 advance
- Quarterfinals (2 heats of 6 marbles)
- Championship Race (1 heat of 6 marbles)

Kentucky Derby Style

- Players sponsor randomly assigned marbles

Race Rules:

Rules will be posted on the Race Registration Table as well as displayed on the TV.

Objective

Be the first marble to cross the finish line. All races are determined solely by gravity—no pushing or interference is allowed.

Equipment

- All competitors use identical marbles (same size, weight, and material).
- The race track must remain the same for all competitors during a round.
- Finish line should be clearly marked.

Starting the Race

1. Each marble is assigned a lane or starting gate.
2. Marbles are placed behind the starting line.
3. A race official releases all marbles simultaneously using a gate or starting bar.
4. No participant may touch a marble after the start.

Winning

- The first marble whose entire body crosses the finish line wins.
- If two marbles appear tied, officials may declare a tie or conduct a rerun

Lane Rotation

To keep races fair:

- Rotate marbles into different lanes each round.
- If the track favors one lane, every competitor gets equal opportunities.

False Starts

If a marble begins rolling before the official release:

- Restart the race.
- If caused by a participant, that marble may be disqualified.

Track Issues

If:

- a marble leaves the track due to damage,
- the starting gate malfunctions,
- the track is accidentally bumped,

...the race is declared **No Contest** and rerun.

Naming Marbles

This makes races much more entertaining.

Examples:

- Lightning Bolt
- Chaos
- Lucky Strike
- Blue Thunder
- Rocket
- Green Machine
- Fireball
- Midnight
- The Kraken

- Lucky Duck

You can even let spectators "adopt" a marble before the race.

Championship Ideas

Award prizes for:

- 1st Place Champion
- Fastest Time
- Most Wins
- Biggest Upset
- Best Marble Name

Event Flow

1. Registration
2. Marble assignment (random draw)
3. Qualifying heats
4. Quarterfinals
5. Semifinals
6. Championship race
7. Awards and photos

House Rules

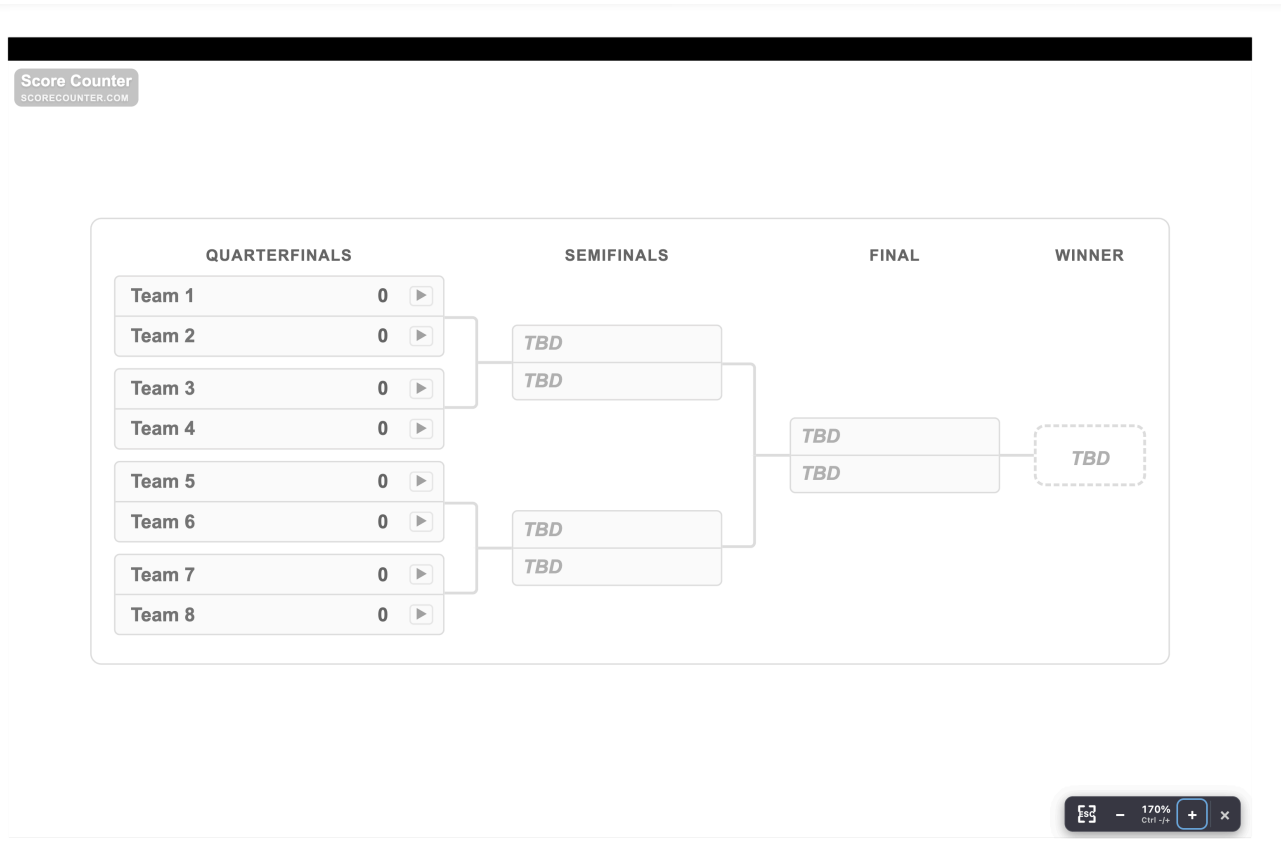
- Officials' decisions are final.
- Unsportsmanlike conduct may result in disqualification.
- Participants must remain behind barriers during races.
- Spectators may cheer, but may not touch the track.
- Have fun—it's marble racing!

For an event at the Anchor Boat Club, you could also add themed races between rounds (such as "Fastest Red Marble," "Last Marble Standing," or a "Members vs. Guests Championship") to keep the crowd engaged while the tournament progresses. These side events add excitement and give spectators more chances to participate.

Tournament Management

Tournaments can be managed in a variety of ways:

- Printed brackets on whiteboard/posterboard & easel
- Using software or website (like [ScoreCounter](https://scorecounter.com)). Display results on large screen TV.



Record:

- Heat winners
- Fastest times
- Championship bracket

Pricing Models

For a nonprofit club fundraiser, the ideal entry fee should feel affordable while generating enough revenue to cover prizes and expenses. Here are a few pricing models that work well.

Option 1: Casual Family Event (Recommended)

- \$5 per marble
- One marble per race
- Winner advances through the tournament

Pros:

- Low barrier to entry
- Encourages families and first-time players
- Participants often buy multiple entries

Option 2: Tournament Entry

- \$10 per marble
- Includes entry into the full tournament
- Top finishers receive prizes

Example

- 64 marbles × \$10 = **\$640**
- \$200 in prizes
- \$440 remaining for the club (before expenses)

Option 3: Premium Event

- \$20 per marble
- Larger cash payout or premium prizes
- Best suited for adults and larger events

Option 4: "Adopt-a-Marble"

Rather than entering with a personal marble, participants randomly draw one from a pool.

- \$5 adoption fee
- Each marble has a fun name and personality
- Every race is completely random and fair

This format creates excitement because everyone has an equal chance to win.

Add-On Revenue Ideas

You can increase fundraising without raising the entry fee:

- **\$5 Mulligan** – Buy back into the tournament after one early elimination (if your format allows it).
- **50/50 Raffle** – Sell tickets throughout the event.
- **Sponsor a Marble** – Local businesses pay \$25–\$100 to have their name on a marble or race lane.
- **Championship Calcutta** – Auction off finalist marbles before the championship race (if permitted by your local laws and club policies).
- **Merchandise** – Event T-shirts, hats, stickers, or commemorative pint glasses.
- **Specialty Drinks** – A themed "Marble Madness" cocktail or mocktail fits well with the event and can have strong profit margins.
- **Food Specials** – Simple, high-margin items like hot dogs, burgers, fries, popcorn, and desserts.

Prize Ideas

You don't necessarily have to pay out cash. Some other options could be:

- Trophy
- Engraved plaque
- Club drink tokens
- Free meal or drink voucher
- Event T-shirt
- Cash prize (for larger tournaments)

Recommendation

To start, I'd consider:

- \$5/\$10 per marble
- Allow participants to purchase **up to 3 marbles** (\$15/\$30 maximum).
- Cap the tournament at **64 marbles**.

That could generate:

- 64 entries × \$10 = **\$640** in entry fees; 64 entries × \$5 = **\$320** in entry fees
- Plus food, drinks, raffles, and merchandise sales

This price point is affordable enough that many guests will buy more than one entry, while still producing meaningful fundraising revenue. You could even sweeten the experience by giving each participant a marble "racing card" with its name, stats, and tournament bracket to follow throughout the event.

Race Sponsorships

Sponsorships offer an excellent opportunity to reduce the club's operating costs while increasing prize payouts and enhancing the overall event experience. For charity tournaments, race sponsorships could also provide an additional avenue for fundraising and community involvement.

Flexible sponsorship levels could be offered to accommodate businesses of all sizes. For example, smaller sponsorships could be available for individual heats, while premium sponsorship packages could include title sponsorship of an entire tournament or special event.

Sponsor Benefits

In return for their support, sponsors would receive valuable brand exposure before, during, and after the event. Sponsor names and logos would be featured on promotional materials, social media posts, printed advertisements, and digital marketing leading up to the event.



During the event, sponsors could receive additional recognition through:

- Digital advertisements displayed on the scoring monitor and televisions.
- Printed signage strategically placed throughout the venue.
- Logo placement on race brackets, scoreboards, or event materials.
- Public announcements recognizing sponsors before featured heats, championship races, and during award presentations.
- Recognition on the club's website and social media platforms following the event.

These opportunities provide sponsors with consistent visibility while demonstrating the club's appreciation for their support.

Use of Sponsorship Funds

Sponsorship contributions would help offset event expenses, including prizes, food and beverage offerings, promotional merchandise, and event supplies. Additional funding could be reinvested into expanding the marble racing program through new track designs, race components, specialty effects, and other equipment that enhances the experience for participants and spectators alike.

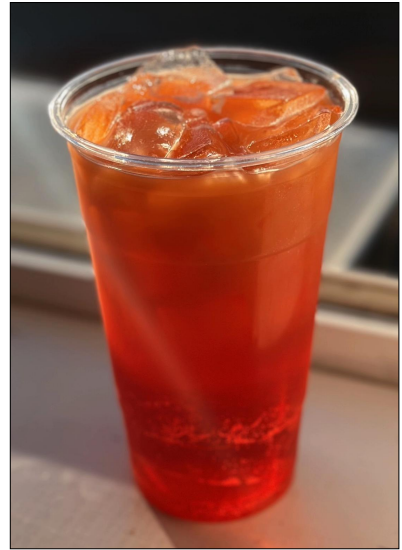
By securing sponsorships, the club can continually improve the quality of the event while minimizing financial risk, increasing prize opportunities, and creating an even more exciting attraction that encourages repeat attendance and helps grow membership.

Drink Specials

Offering specialty drinks during Marble Racing events can increase profit margins while creating a unique and memorable experience for attendees. Custom-themed beverages can reinforce the event's brand identity, encourage additional beverage sales, and add a fun, creative element that enhances the overall atmosphere and keeps guests coming back.

Specialty Drinks (Adults)

- **Pit Stop Punch** - 2 parts white rum, 1 part coconut rum, 2 parts pineapple juice, 2 parts orange juice, 1/2 part grenadine
- **Victory Lap** - Lemonade w/ 2oz. Bourbon, simple syrup
- **Ferrari** - Vodka & Cranberry Juice OR Campari, Sweet Vermouth, Chilled soda water, Orange Twist
- **Pole Position** - 2oz tequila, 1 oz lime juice, grapefruit soda. Salted rim, lime slice garnish
- **Finish Line** - Milk punch (1oz brandy or bourbon, 1oz dark rum or bourbon, 1/2 ounce simple syrup, 4-6oz of milk or half & half) or White Russian (kahlua, vodka, heavy cream).
- **Nitrous** - 1oz midori, 1oz vodka, energy drink.



Specialty Drinks (Kids)

- **Qwik Lap** - Plain lemonade
- **Transmission Fluid** - Blue or Red fruit punch

Food Specials

The event should feature a simple, crowd-pleasing menu that is easy to prepare and serve. Food options may include:

- hamburgers/cheeseburgers
- hot dogs
- french fries
- popcorn
- other concession-style favorites
- desserts (i.e cookies, brownies, ice cream, or specialty treats)



Another option could be working with a vendor such as Edinburgers to provide service instead of leaving the responsibility on the club.

Race Event Requirements:

The following requirements are based on estimated resources and costs found during research of this project.

<i>Item</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Cost</i>
Race Track	4-8 lanes, preferably customizable	\$100-\$500
Starting Gate	Lanes for each marbles. Deploy marbles equally on track	N/A
Finish Area	“Groove” design (finishers shoot) to easily determine finish positions	N/A
Marbles	Various colors. Same size. Same weight.	\$5-\$10
PA System	Use for announcements, music, etc.	\$0
Display	Use ABC display to display race information, sponsors, etc.	\$0
Registration Forms	Printed forms w/ contact information, marble, etc.	\$1-\$5
Cash Box / Payment	Similar to QoH.	\$0
Tables / Chairs	6-8 tables / 6 chairs per table. Race Registration/Scoring Table	\$0
Timer	(Optional). Used for timed races. Could use phone.	
Trophies / Medals	Instead of \$\$\$\$. Purchase or 3D print	\$3-\$5 per
Staffing	<i>(See Staffing Roles below)</i>	\$0
Event Reservation	Approval from Entertainment Chair prior to event	\$0

Staffing Roles:

Announcer

Using the Club's P.A. System, this position would be responsible for announcing:

- Race rules
- Race start/end
- Winners
- Sponsor information
- Scheduling information
- Optional food/drink specials

Scorekeeper / Display Operator

This position would be responsible for:

- accurately displaying race information including:
 - Race times
 - Race results / winners
 - Prize information
 - Race sponsor information
 - Managing tournament board

Track Official / Starter / Track Reset / Finish Judge

This position would be responsible for:

- Making sure track is properly assembled and functioning
- Conducting race warm-ups
- Starting each race
- Deterring any interference from players, etc.
- Officiating race finish
- Resetting track for next race, etc.

Bookie / Prize Coordinator

This position is responsible for:

- Registration
- Collection & management of race payments
- Management of prize money, etc.

Bartender

The number of bartenders will depend on the attendance. 1-2 bartenders would be expected for these events. For family events, it would be good to make sure the bar is stock for underage guests. Possibly offering adult-friendly / non-alcoholic "race themed" drink specials could be an option.

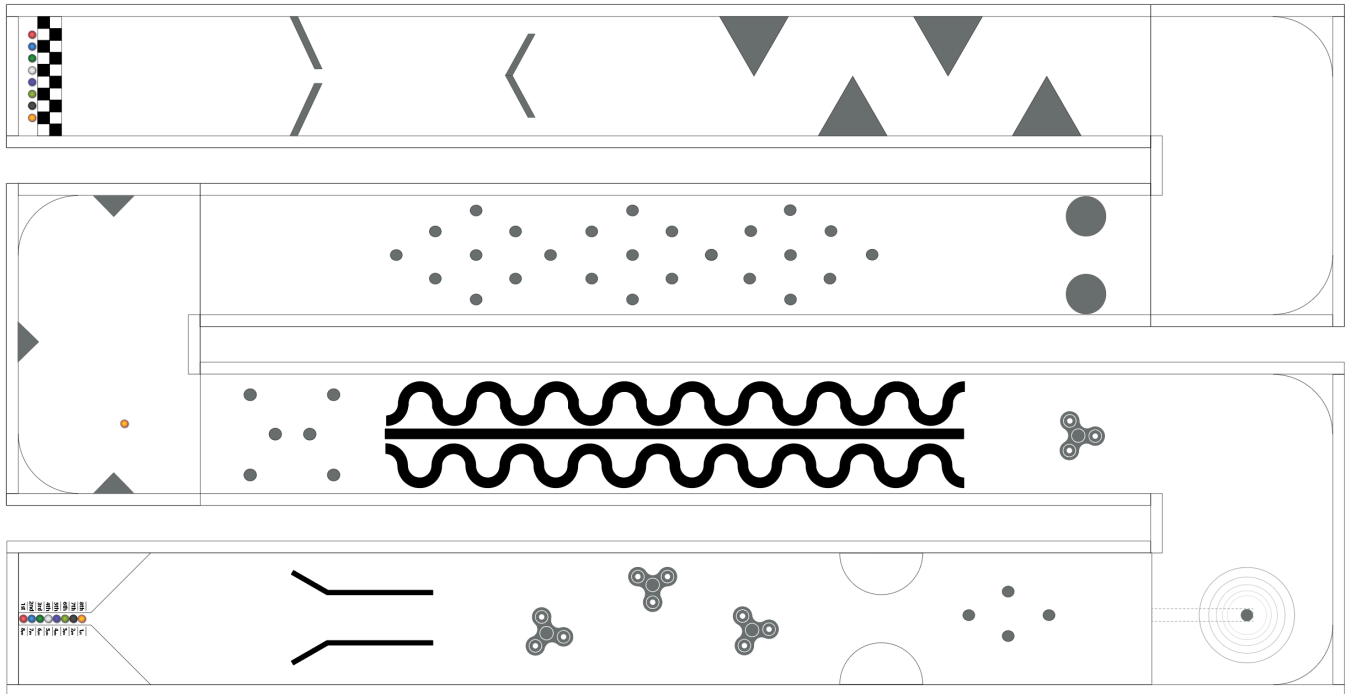
Food (optional)

While not necessary, having food options available would be another selling point for the club as well as help keep people entertained between races. Sports & food go together.

Sample Track

This is a layered track. The Starting Line begins at the top and each section lies below the section above it. Track is estimated to have a 5° declination.

Estimated size of this track is 4.5' x 8'. Marbles are 5/8".



Set-Up Estimations

<i>Item</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Time</i>
Track Setup	4-8 lanes, preferably customizable	15-30 min
PA Setup	Set up PA system in banquet room	10-15 min
TV setup	Connect laptop to banquet room display	5-10 min
Tables & Chairs	Set up tables and chairs for staff & guests.	20-30 min
Registration Forms	Gather forms, pens, and any other paperwork. Print additional forms if needed	5-10 min
Payments	Cash box, iPad w/ Square, etc.	5-10 min
Tournament Board	(Optional) If TV Display is not being used)	15-20 min
Bar Set Up	Stock coolers. Prepare for specialty drinks	15-45 min
		90 -120 min

*times could be less with additional support

Tear-Down Estimations

<i>Item</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Time</i>
Track Storage	Tear down track and store in basement	15-30 min
PA Teardown	Put away and store equipment	10-15 min
TV	Unhook from TV & turn off	2 min
Tables & Chairs	Put away tables & chairs	15-20 min
Paperwork	\$\$\$, forms, etc.	5 min
Cleaning	Sweep / mop banquet floor	15-20 min
Trash	Pick up & remove trash bags.	15-20 min
Bar	Restock if needed; clean equipment & counters, move chairs	15-20 min
Security	Lock doors (if needed)	2 min
		90 -120 min

*times could be less with additional support

Sample Tournament Schedule

11:00am	Registration Opens
12:00pm	Practice Runs
12:30pm	Rules Meeting
1:00pm	Tournament Begins
3:00pm	Semi-Finals
3:30pm	Championship
4:00pm	Awards

Sample Tournament Schedule 2

6:00pm	Registration Opens
7:30pm	Practice Runs
7:45pm	Rules Meeting
8:00pm	Tournament Begins
8:30pm	Semi-Finals
8:45pm	Championship
9:00pm	Awards

Pros

- **Appeals to all ages**, making it an engaging, family-friendly event that everyone can enjoy.
- **Low cost to host**, with track construction representing the primary upfront investment.
- **Minimal setup and teardown**, reducing the burden on volunteers and making the event easy to organize.
- **Scalable track design**. Tracks can range from simple and inexpensive to elaborate, multi-level layouts. While more complex designs require additional time and materials, they create a more exciting experience, increase unpredictability, and encourage repeat play.
- **Flexible venue options**, allowing the event to be held in either the banquet room or the Multi-Purpose Building (MPB/"Cook Shack").
- **Limited staffing needs**, requiring only 3–4 volunteers, depending on the size and format of the event.
- **Revenue-generating potential**, with proceeds benefiting the club, a charitable organization, or both. Could be paired with other options such as food/drink specials, silent auctions, etc.
- **Creative prize opportunities**. Instead of cash payouts, winners could receive novelty trophies, gift cards, free pizza, drink tokens, club merchandise, or other fun prizes that keep costs manageable while adding to the experience.
- **Friendly, low-pressure competition**. The event aligns well with the club's tradition of casual, entertaining competitions where participants of all skill levels can have fun.
- **A unique opportunity to lead**. No other local organizations are currently hosting this type of event, giving us the chance to establish ourselves as the premier destination for marble racing.
- **A touch of nostalgia**. Marble racing evokes childhood memories for many adults while introducing a timeless game to younger participants, creating a shared experience across generations.
- **Excellent marketing potential**. A unique, family-friendly event can generate community interest, increase visibility for the club, attract first-time visitors, and create opportunities to recruit new members.
- (Optional) Contact information could be collected during registration so race attendance could be optional. Winners could be contacted post-race. Optimally, we would encourage players to stay & play.
- (Optional) Races could be recorded and available for viewing post-race. Streaming would not be recommended (for technical reasons but not to discourage race attendance).

Cons

- Needs to be disassembled into sections to/from storage
- Would be considered a game of chance. Therefore, because of our gambling license, extra paperwork & a \$25 fee would be incurred for each event.
- For larger events, more set up time and resources may be needed (i.e. tables / chairs, food / drink, etc)
- Occasionally changing track theme / design may add to additional costs / building time.