

No Pain, All Gain: Paintball Offers Excitement, Fun For All Ages

BY KERRI RALLS
PLAYLIST REPORTER

When his son first brought home a paintball gun years ago, Bob Short was skeptical.

"We don't like guns," Short said. "We don't have any in our house."

But, Short said he tried out the paintball gun and found that not only was it safe, it was fun.

It was so much fun, in fact, that Short opened a store dedicated to all things paintball.

All Star Paintball, on Illinois Avenue in Maumee, deals in the sale, repair and upgrading of paintball equipment.

After seeing his sons' interest in the sport and the lack of local businesses dealing in the related equipment, Short started the business as a part-time job.

All Star Paintball first opened in 2001 in a small storefront in Whitehouse.

Short said that first store was only open 25 hours per week, but saw good business.

"It just kept getting busier and busier," Short said.

When an opportunity came to move the store to



The employees at All Star Paintball, (from left) owner Bob Short, Mike Prouty, Chris Short, Jake Brooks and Nick Short, are all paintball enthusiasts. The store deals in the latest paintball equipment and offers a number of services, including tank refills, equipment repair and upgrade, and speed adjustments.

PLAYLIST PHOTO BY KERRI RALLS

Maumee near The Andersons in September 2005, Short took it.

Now a family-owned and -operated business with Short's sons Chris, 19, and Nick, 16, as employees, All Star Paintball is a full-time job.

The store, which draws business from all over Ohio, Michigan and Indiana, sells guns, goggles, paintballs, har-

nesses, jerseys and virtually every paintball accessory on the market. Three of the main brands offered are Tippman, Spyder and Piranha.

Customers come back time and again to stock up on paintballs or get new gear.

"It's addicting," Short said.

Short says that on more than one occasion, fathers have mirrored his own experience.

They bring in their sons to get the equipment, take it home and try it out.

A few days later, the men are back in the store looking at gear for themselves.

A starter kit for paintball beginners is quite simple.

According to Short, newbies need a gun, a tank, paintballs and goggles.

Guns range in price from approximately \$79.00 to \$2,000, depending on the manufacturer and quality.

All Star Paintball stocks both nitrogen and CO2 tanks in varying sizes.

"Obviously, the larger the tank, the less you have to stop to refill," Short said.

The first purchase of the tank will run anywhere from \$20.00 to \$40.00, depending on size. After the initial cost, however, refills are inexpensive.

At All Star Paintball, refills on the largest tanks are only \$3.00.

The actual 68-caliber paintballs themselves come in bags of 500, which cost from \$12.00 to \$18.00, depending on the quality of the ball.

For the more trigger happy in the group, cases come with 2,000 paintballs.

According to Nick Short, higher quality paintballs have a thicker shell and higher quality paint inside.

Regardless of brand, all paintballs are nontoxic and biodegradable.

Short said the paint will wash off virtually any surface with the right treatment.

One of the most important pieces of equipment, however, is the goggles, Short said.

Paintball goggles cover virtually all of the face because, while Nick Short said getting hit isn't too painful, it could cause damage to the eyes.

And it definitely smarts on exposed skin.

"You can get some welts," Bob Short said.

But before all the nervous mothers go hiding the paintball guns, the Shorts said paintball guns are really pretty harmless.

First, players wear the goggles and typically cover their skin in long clothing.

Chris Short said another good investment is gloves, which have padding on the fingers.

Also, there are limits to how fast the ball can travel.

These speeds can be set and adjusted by the staff at All Star Paintball to keep the ball speed within the safe limit.

Right now, Short said, All Star Paintball's clientele is mostly men.

"That's something I'd like to change," he said. "I don't want girls to not get involved."

For the boys, and the few girls currently involved, Short said 10 is an appropriate age to start.

And while paintball guns

There, paintball wars can commence among the many inflatable bunkers.

Two popular paintball games are Xball and speedball.

The similar games pit teams against each other in modified versions of capture the flag, rolling and ducking among the bunkers as they try to take out their opponents.

Both sports have recently been broadcast on ESPN, a fact that didn't surprise the Shorts.

Chris Short said paintball games are global, with teams from countries around the world showing up at big competitions like the ones showcased on TV.

In this area, local paintball stores and arenas often sponsor tournaments of the two games.

For more information on local contests or for paintball equipment information and sales, contact All Star Paintball at (419) 482-0549.

Located at 410 Illinois Ave. in Maumee, the store is open Monday through Friday from 11:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. and on Saturday from 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. All Star Paintball is closed on Sunday.



Chris Short, All Star Paintball employee and son of owner Bob Short, gets decked out in paintball gear, complete with jersey, mask and goggles. All Star Paintball carries seemingly every paintball accessory and all the major brands, including Tippmann, Spyder and Piranha equipment.

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