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Nucleus outdoor playground system: Our strongest, most versatile playground ever

BCI Burke has introduced a new outdoor playground system that allows you to build more variety into your playgrounds, integrate traditional and fitness-oriented equipment, and make better use of limited playground space.

The new Nucleus outdoor playground system uses a new connection system that combines a dual direct-bolt clamp system with industry-standard 5" O.D. (outer diameter) posts.

"Customers have been telling us they wanted a better way to integrate our fitness-oriented Intensity outdoor play complex with our more traditional component systems built around platforms. Nucleus enables us to respond to the market demand with a system that accomplishes that -- and much more," said Tim Ahern, president of BCI Burke.

Central to Nucleus is Burke's new KoreKonnnect system, which uses a proprietary dual direct-bolt connection and a clamping system that allows customers to connect each platform to more components.

"Many schools have playgrounds that are used for recreation after school hours. They've told us their needs during the school day differ from those after hours. While children are at school, teachers like to organize fitness activities around Intensity, often using the Intensity Curriculum developed for the playground. But after hours and during free play time, schools still want traditional post-and-platform playground equipment," said Ahern.

The new playground will be TUV certified to the EN (European Norm) standard, paving the way for Burke to offer its full line of playground components internationally.

Fitness-oriented playground equipment is growing in importance in schools because of the surge in childhood obesity. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report that among children between six and 11, the prevalence of obesity has shot up from 6.5 percent in the 1970s to 17 percent in 2003-2006.

The Nucleus playground system is designed not only for strength and versatility, but also for ease of installation, according to Ahern.

"The holes for the direct bolts are pre-drilled in our factory for precision, so customers don't have to worry about drilling them during installation and risking mistakes. This makes the installation go much faster, with the greatest possible precision. In addition, the decks are connected using our new EZKonnnect system, a self-leveling system on which we have a patent pending," said Ahern.

Thinking like kids keeps the innovation coming



By Tim Ahern

September has always been a good time for innovations. During this month 121 years ago, George Eastman patented the first camera to use roll film. (September 1930 brought us the invention of the flashbulb to go along with the camera.) It was also the month when, over the years, we've been treated to such products as the TV receiver and even an improved monkey wrench.

But at BCI Burke, September 2009 will always be remembered for the introduction of our new Nucleus outdoor playground system. And to anyone who suggests that innovations for kids don't matter as much as those for their parents, I point to the Olmec tribe of Mexico, which 3,000 years ago had several written languages, a 365-day calendar, and an amazing understanding of astronomy.

Oh yes, and they had the wheel.

But they didn't use it on chariots or wagons or wheelbarrows. In fact, archaeologists say they don't seem to have used wheels on anything but toys.

To some, it might appear that the Olmecs -- so smart in so many ways -- were fairly myopic in missing such an obvious application, and no doubt they're right. But I like to think something else was at work, like an advanced view of the importance of children.

We adults have a tendency to think our needs and ideas are more important than those of our kids. We send the children out to play when it's time to get serious and talk about grownup stuff. But while we're rehashing the same old ideas we've had all our lives, our kids are going about something a lot more important -- growing, learning and inventing.

That's one reason we're focusing on innovation as the theme for our 2010 catalog. Kids always seem to re-create the way they play every day. That means we have to work extra hard at creating playgrounds that capture those active imaginations and provide the challenges that help the next generation develop.

Since we don't have any children on our engineering staff (I don't think that's legal), we have to do the next best thing -- spend time around them, learn to think like them, and make sure our new equipment passes muster with them.

I think our team hit a home run with Nucleus, which you can read about in other parts of this issue of Playground Adviser. And as long as we keep our focus on the kids, I'm confident there will be some great Septembers ahead.

Playground veteran bullish about Nucleus

With more than 19 years in the playground industry, Aaron Vicars knows it's rare to find a unique playground system. That's why he's excited about BCI Burke's new Nucleus outdoor playground system, which is breaking through typical playground molds by integrating traditional components with fitness oriented activities.

The secret is an innovative direct-bolt clamp system that allows for greater diversity of playground components. The result is a more versatile playground that fits more activities into a smaller space.

"We've had customers who have wanted traditional playground components as well as some Intensity events. The direct-bolt clamp system on Nucleus allows customers to mix and match activities and give kids the best of both worlds," said Vicars, owner of Burke Playgrounds of Kentucky and Tennessee, which represents BCI Burke in those two states.

But the direct-bolt clamp system isn't the only thing that Nucleus has improved. Nucleus also eases installation troubles.

"Nucleus simplifies installation because the parts come from the factory with pre-drilled holes and self-leveling decks. These are important especially if a community is coming together to install the playground. You don't have people worrying about whether holes and parts will match or if a deck is even. You simply line up the pieces," he said.

Vicars also says that customers will love that it comes with Burke's industry-leading Generations Warranty.



“People just love Burke’s warranty because it is non-prorated and because it’s the longest in the industry. With operating budgets the way they are, it is nice to have a non-prorated warranty for your playground and to receive a ‘no charge’ invoice,” said Vicars.