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## Paintball fields open in Dixie County with games that include shooting at zombies



**Alex Boyette, 16, (left) and Michael Huffman, 17, stand with paintball guns in hand and are outfitted with masks and chest guards. They are standing near the air compressor station. Another one of the workers on Sunday was Chris Mullins, who served as the referee in the match of zombies versus mother and son.**

**Story, Photos and Video By Jeff M. Hardison © Nov. 30, 2015 @ 8:27 p.m.**

**DIXIE COUNTY** -- The last couple of zombie shooters in Dixie County on Sunday (Nov. 29) were a mother and son team.

It was just the second day of full operations, but the zombies were shooting back on occasion, too, as everyone provided for a video portrayal of the action that started the day before.

It seems like Raelynn Brownell, 29, and her son Wyatt O'Steen, 7, won the paintball battle with the zombies. The mother-son team walked off the paintball field without a smidgeon of paint on them and the zombies were definitely tagged by paintballs where they had been shot by these final two shooters on Sunday.

Normally, the youngest age for a person to participate in paintball at Dixie Paintball is 10 years old. However, Ed Pivacek said, if a child shows enough maturity and they are closely supervised by their parent, then they can pull the trigger at a younger age.

Ed and Beverly Pivacek own The Putnam Lodge and Spa, which is a full-service hotel, spa, restaurant and bar on the north end of Cross City in an area known as Shamrock. This historic structure is on the east side of U.S. Highway 19, just a bit north of the last traffic light for northbound traffic going through Cross City.

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**Raelynn Brownell and her son Wyatt O'Steen shoot at zombies.**



The Pivaceks are the former owners of Rumblewoods Paintball in Tampa. Ed said this set of four fields in Cross City is even better than what they owned in Tampa.

These four fields include one target range field, and there is going to be a Zombie Train Night Event, where eight riders will sit on a trailer and be taken through a course at night. The paintball guns are fixed on the sides, so that it is impossible to shoot anyone in the trailer, Pivacek said. He is also going to be buying paintballs that will light up under an ultraviolet light to create tracers as the shooters fire at zombies.



**Some of the 150 seats available at picnic tables - both in the open and under cover.**

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With a 38-foot by 70-foot cover, there is plenty of room for paintball players to become prepared as they collect weapons, ammo and safety gear.

While one part of a party is playing paintball, another couple of people may want to enjoy the beach scene that is set up – shark and all. Jimmy's Tractor Service is one of the company's involved in creating the whole course.



Equipped with eight paintball guns that cannot be turned to shoot anyone in the trailer, this is the future ride through the Night Zombie Trail adventure for paintball shooters.



The signs say it all. The property is insured. There is a beware of dog sign too.

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**These unexploded paintballs are ready to be loaded and fired.**

**Paintballs splatter to show a couple of the different colors.**



**Guns, ammunition, masks and chest guards are all included in the price.**

Located on the 18-acre site for The Putnam Lodge, Dixie Paintball is open every day. On

Mondays through Fridays, the way to play is to have 10 or more participants and then to call 813-390-4489 to arrange for the fun to begin.

“Here, the deer shoot back,” Pivacek said. “Are you up for the challenge?”

On Saturdays, just show up between the hours of 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. at 15487 N.W. U.S. Highway 19, and all systems are go. On Sundays, the hours are noon to 4 p.m.

For \$28, the paintball participant is provided with everything. They get all-day admission, a gun, a mask, a chest protector, 500 rounds of paintballs, and the air supply needed to launch those little projectiles. Pivacek does not allow people to bring their own ammunition, because he wants quality control on what is shot on these fields. His paintballs are water soluble.

These paintballs are also stored in the cold to keep them crisp and firm. A warm paintball becomes soft and mushy. It can jam in the gun or not break open on impact. The spongy paintballs don't travel as straight, either, Pivacek said.

Saturday, the first day of the open paintball fields, everyone had fun, Pivacek said. Teachers and coaches are talking about participating in the sport, he said.

In paintball matches, there can be so many people on each side of the field, he said, that – at the start when everyone launches – it looks like the movie 300, which is a 2006 American fantasy war film based on the 1998 comic series of the same name by Frank Miller and Lynn Varley.

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In that movie, there is a scene where there are so many arrows in the sky being launched at the same time from each side that it darkens the sky when the arrows block the sun's rays.

"We have people who are zombies," Pivacek said.

This provides shooters with live targets.

In another version of the sport, though, there are two teams that shoot at each other. Paintball is a sport in which players compete, in teams or individually, to eliminate opponents by tagging them with capsules containing water-soluble dye and featuring a gelatin outer shell (referred to as paintballs) propelled from a device called a paintball marker (commonly referred to as a paintball gun).

Paintballs are composed of a non-toxic, biodegradable, water-soluble polymer. The game is regularly played at a sporting level with organized competition involving major tournaments, professional teams, and players. Game types in paintball vary, but can include capture the flag, elimination, ammunition limits, defending or attacking a particular point or area, or capturing objects of interest hidden in the playing area. Depending on the variant played, games can last from seconds to hours, or even days in scenario play.

There is no smoking on the paintball fields. There is no drinking of alcoholic beverages on the paintball fields, however after-hours drinking is welcome at the full-service bar.

And there is the hotel, right there to spend one or more nights. The restaurant includes food prepared by Chef Geno Koch, a renowned culinary arts master.

Patrons can even arrange to have special camping on the site.

There is seating for 150 people at picnic tables outside the shooting area. There is parking available for 500 vehicles, Pivacek said, and so there is no reason not to consider a very large paintball experience.

The facilities are all brand new. In addition to the four paintball fields, and the Zombie Night Train Course, there is a covered area that measures 38-feet by 70-feet, where players are outfitted with gear and guns are filled with air. The 4,500 pounds-per-square-inch of pressure are what sends the paintballs at a speed of 285 feet-per-second.

A brand new restroom facility has been constructed with showers too.

The future of many paintball adventures has opened in Dixie County now. With the future Night Zombie Train, the draw for people will reach to Alachua, Marion, Columbia, Citrus and



**Some of the armory of new paintball guns await people to use them.**

**Thousands of paintballs are stored in a cooler to keep them crisp and hard.**

other counties beyond the Tri-County Area of Levy, Dixie and Gilchrist counties. Paintball enthusiasts from the Tampa Bay Area may even become drawn to this new venue for the sport.

Another option is in the offing as well.

"I'm planning to have music," Pivacek said.

"Then the kids can jam out while they're playing paintball."



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