

The Jockeybox

Written in 1990 by Teri Fahrendorf
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What is a Jockeybox

A jockeybox is an apparatus designed to chill and serve 2 or 3 beers simultaneously. It is actually a large picnic cooler which has been modified. Jockeyboxes can be purchased, or made at home. You could even make a little 1-tap jockeybox.

How it works

Three beer inlet connections are on the side of the jockeybox. These connect to three cornelius kegs or other kegs via hoses.

Inside the jockeybox, each beer inlet connection leads to a stainless coil, and then to a beer outlet or tap on the front of the box. Ice is placed into the jockeybox, especially in and around the coils. As the beer flows through the coils, it chills quickly. This is most useful on a hot day, or if the beer in the cornelius kegs is warm.

Equipment needed for Cold Beer (assume a 3-keg jockeybox)

1. Jockeybox
2. CO2 cylinder
3. CO2 regulator with one-way check valve
4. CO2 lines that T into three lines, or 2 more CO2 cylinders.
(Optional - 3 mini regulators, one for each T line.)
5. Ice
6. Water bucket
7. Crescent wrench and tap wrench (See Equipment needed to build your own, below.)
8. Extra rubber washers

How to use the Jockeybox

1. Setting it Up

- a. Set jockeybox on a sturdy surface. A table is best.
- b. Fill to the top of the coils inside with ice. **Never** put any food in the jockeybox. It may look like a picnic cooler, but it is not. Only ice and water should go inside. Food may cause bacterial contamination later.
- c. Fill with ice and water to the top of the coils. Make sure the drain plug is closed.
- d. Set the 3 cornelius kegs out of your way. Under the table is best.

e. Attach the beer hoses to the inlet ports on the side of the jockeybox. Be sure there is a small rubber washer for each connection. This prevents beer from leaking under pressure. You will probably need a crescent wrench to connect the hoses.

f. Close the jockeybox taps. Attach the beer lines to the cornelius kegs. You should now be able to pull a little beer from each of the taps.

2. CO2 Connection

a. Attach CO2 hoses to the CO2 cylinder.

b. Close the one-way check valve, and set the regulator to 25 or more psi. Open the check valve. If you have 3 mini-regulators in-line, set them the same way for about 15 psi each. (If you have double coils set the main regulator to about 40 psi, and the mini-regulators to about 22 psi.)

c. Open any toggle switches or check valves in the CO2 lines, so that CO2 is rushing out of the lines. (You can use a pen to push in the pin on each of the cornelius fittings to make sure the CO2 is on and flowing.)

d. Connect the CO2 lines to the cornelius kegs. You are now pushing beer through the Jockeybox.

3. Disconnecting

a. Close the Jockeybox taps. Disconnect the CO2 connections from the cornelius kegs, while the CO2 is still flowing. Then turn off the large valve on the top of the CO2 cylinder.

b. Disconnect the beer hoses from the cornelius kegs first.

c. Disconnect the beer hoses from the jockeybox. Don't lose the washers.

d. Disconnect the CO2 hoses from the CO2 cylinder.

4. Cleaning the Jockeybox

As you might imagine, it is important to keep the jockeybox clean so that bacteria does not grow inside the lines and coils and change the flavor of the beer as it is served. The jockeybox is cleaned with a little help from a cornelius and a CO2 cylinder.

Fill a cornelius half-full with a TSP or other cleaning solution. Hook up the CO2 cylinder and connect to one of the jockeybox inlet connections. Pull cleaning solution through to the tap until all beer is out and let run a few seconds. Reconnect to next inlet connection and pull through next tap. Repeat for third inlet and tap. You have just cleaned all the coils.

Now rinse the cornelius and fill half-full with a mild bleach solution. (1/2 oz. bleach in 2.5 gal. of water.) Attach CO2 and pull through to each tap as described above.

Now rinse cornelius again, and run cold water through jockeybox to each tap as described above. To purge final rinse water, let all water flow out of last tap until CO2 is spitting through. Hook empty but pressurized cornelius up to the other two taps, and let the CO2 push the rinse water through them too.

The coils are now clean and clear. Just wipe the inside and outside of the jockeybox with a damp cloth to remove beer stains. Store the jockeybox with the drain plug open, the taps open, and the lid slightly ajar (until dry inside.)

Before next use, just run the bleach water and then rinse water through the jockeybox. REMEMBER, always run rinse water after the bleach water. NEVER leave bleach water in the coils overnight. They are thin and expensive, and the bleach will eat tiny holes in them. The next morning you would have a beer sprinkler instead of a beer server.

If you don't let the beer sit in the coils overnight, you can skip the TSP or cleaning step; just do the bleach water and rinse water steps. Every now and then the jockeybox coils should be thoroughly cleaned with TSP or other cleaning solution.

Don't forget to clean your beer hoses!

Equipment needed to build your own (assume a 3-keg jockeybox)

1. One large plastic picnic cooler
2. Drill, crescent wrench, and screwdriver or pincher (depending on the type of hose clamps you use).
3. Three stainless steel coils
 - a. Single coils are 50' x 5/16 ID stainless tubing.
 - b. Double coils use both 3/8 ID and 1/4 ID to increase pressure flow. Double coils cool more efficiently but cost about \$100 each.
4. Three beer faucet assemblies with tap handles (beer outlet outside box)
5. Three beer shank assemblies (beer outlet through box)
6. Three beer cooler couplings (beer inlet through box)
7. Three faucet coupling hex or wing nuts, and hose tail pieces to attach to your 3 beer hoses (beer inlet outside box)
8. Optional 6 more faucet coupling hex or wing nuts, and hose tail pieces if you make your own coils. See below. (beer inlet and outlet inside box)

9. Neoprene coupling washers for hex or wing nut connections

10. One tap or faucet wrench

11. Hose clamps for hose tail pieces and beer hoses.

12. Beer hose

Note: 1. If you buy the coils, they come with hex nut fittings to attach to the cooler couplings (beer inlet) and beer shank assemblies (beer outlet) inside the cooler box.

2. If you bend your own coils, you will have to connect short pieces of hose to both ends of the coils, and then to a hose tail piece and faucet coupling hex or wing nut. This will allow you to connect the coils to the beer inlets and outlets inside the box.

Jockeyboxes, parts and catalogs can be ordered from these sources:

Rapids Equipment

P.O. Box 396 (Rapids has the best prices generally.
Cedar Rapids, IA 52406 Actual prices are half of the
1-800-553-7906 price listed in their catalog.)

Foxx Equipment

421 Southwest Blvd.
Kansas City, MO 64108
K.C.: 1-800-821-2254
Denver: 1-800-525-2484

Superior Equipment

P.O. Box 64177
St. Paul, MN 55164
Orders: 1-800-328-9800
Service: 1-800-328-9400

Author's Note: The San Andreas Malts home brew club has a club jockeybox which is used at club functions. Members are also allowed to check the jockeybox out for private functions.

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