

Materials and Initial Measuring

Obviously since we were going to build two tables simultaneously we needed a comfortable working space. Our grandfather-in-law's garage was the perfect location. He offered, and we had access to a heated garage, truck to haul our materials, saw horses, many of the tools we'd need, knowledge, and a mini bar just inside the door. Who could resist that?

We first went to Lowe's and bought 6 planks of 4' x 8' pine. We did buy two planks of the nicer pine that displayed the grain of the wood in a better fashion. The top plank to the left was one of the pieces used for the race track.

I would strongly suggest staying **away** from Home Depot. That store is useless, and only takes up space on this planet.

In any case.... For what we did, we needed 3 planks of wood for each table. When browsing their lumber selection, don't worry so much about knots or the appearance of the wood. For our tables, you only really need one nice looking piece of wood for the race track. It doesn't need to be pristine or perfect all over.

Besides, you'll probably end up taking what you can get.



We first tempted to first try the string method for measuring out our cuts. We purchased picture hanging wire for this purpose, as it doesn't stretch like yarn does.

If your table is 4' by 8' you'll want to measure 24 inches from each side to come up with a center starting point. From there you'll mark where you'll hammer in a starting nail and run your string (wire) from to trace out your arc pattern.

That didn't really work out well for us. We did every step outlined on all the other sites you'll find out there. However, every time we drew a line to measure our arcs, we received a different measurement.

This made us nervous as this first cut of wood was going to be our template to trace out the other 5 pieces.

So, we came up with a different idea. We made our own type of "compass" seen below.



We took a straight piece of wood (that was scrap from another project) and marked out our measurements.

We simply drilled a hole that would go over our nail that we hammered in from 24" from all 3 sides.

We then drilled another hole that would hold our pencil 24 inches from our nail.

We then traced our arc, which took away the pressure about holding a string and pencil.

I'd suggest this method if you're going to be using your first piece of wood as a template, especially if this is going to be the first table you've ever built. You want it to look nice, plus it'll matter later when you match up your baseboard and other pieces together.

Make sure this part is right before you cut.

Measure twice, cut once.



Again making our make shift compass took away all the pressure of alinging out our string or yarn.

You get a perfect measurement that you're happy with. Again, to make things easy, spend more time making sure this measurement is right, as you'll use it to simply trace out your other pieces of wood.

Don't spend on any wood pencils. Any regular pencil or pen will do the trick. You don't need any added costs for something so worthless.

A little bit of trial and error is fine. Your first piece of wood isn't going to show anywhere, so if you draw on it or measure incorrectly, don't worry.

Just make sure you eventually do get it right, and cut from **that** line.

It'll pay off in the end.



Initial Cutting

Here's me making the first cuts.

If you look real close, you can see the initial trace line.

Try to stay as close as you can with your jig saw. I had never used a jig saw before, but didn't have any problem.

It's kind of like kindergarten coloring. Try to stay as close to the line as you can. They don't have to be perfect, but try to to deviate any if possible.



Here's a pic of what you should end up with after your four corners are cut off.

Your cuts should be pretty nice looking, but don't worry if they're not. Imperfections aren't important.



Since we were making two tables at the same time, we used the first cut piece of wood to measure the other five pieces. It acted as our template, and as you can see below, it worked out just fine.

You don't need any working knowledge of power tools or wood work to make this project a success. All you need to be able to do is follow directions.

The process of cutting out the wood isn't difficult, but it can be a bit time consuming. Make sure your jig saw blade is new (or at least still sharp).



We used a 24 teeth per inch blade.

Just take the process slow, and put some energy into your table.

Oh, and take some Tylenol before you go to bed, otherwise you'll wake up with a sore back.

Measuring and Cutting your Rail

Now we didn't want to deviate too much from Junell's plans, so we decided to measure as close to his plans as possible.

Take one of your "not nicer" pieces of wood, and measure a four (4) inch cut inside. Measure this all the way around the material. This is going to be your rail. If you want a larger or smaller rail, make any adjustments necessary.

As you can see we simply used a pencil to mark our cuts.

A t-square is helpful here, but a simple ruler would do the same trick.

After measuring we just used a jig saw to cut out the rail. You'll want to make sure you have a buddy to hold up the rail as you cut it out. The more you cut, the more weight will be unsupported. The last thing you want is to have your race track break or fall as you finish cutting it.

Start your cut on the inside of your line. It doesn't really matter as any wood left over will unfortunately be scrap.

You can probably use some clamps if they reach far enough.



Here you can see the cut out for the rail. Again, your cut doesn't have to be perfect.



Here Cory is cutting the 1.5 inch piece from our "good" piece of wood that will attach to the piece cut out above.



Now, an important note: Do **not** drill inside to start your jig saw cut. This piece of wood is your nicer material that will be used for your race track. You do not want any imperfections inside your measurements.

Simply make a starter table **inside** your 1.5 inch line around the table. Then use that to jig saw all the way around.

Again support is needed to make sure you don't break part of your rail frame as you get farther along in the cutting

The cuts don't need to be perfect, but try not to deviate too much from your measurements.

Most of the piece that is left over will be your actual playing surface, so you don't want many imperfections in that. What you're doing here is just going to be a piece of the rail.

Once Cory and I cut out the two pieces, we glued and screwed (but didn't tattoo) them together.

On the pic below we have our rail pieces up side down.

We used a line of wood glue and then clamped both pieces together.

For added stability we used some 1.25 inch screws around the rail



You can use as many as you want, but don't over do it. This piece will be covered by a layer of foam as well as a layer of vinyl. This is where your company is going to rest their elbows, and will be 100% unseen by your players.

We used about 3-4 on each side, and 1-2 on the arcs of the wood.

Wipe away any glue that is seeping out, and let it dry for about an hour or so.

Here's another angle of our rail as it's drying.



Here's a close up of our rail frame.

The 4" cut piece of wood is in the middle (on top of a scrap piece of wood), and our 1.5" piece is on top.

Notice that the cuts aren't perfect, and they won't be as they came from two different pieces of wood. Try to match them up as perfect as possible. If they're not 100% centered and flush, don't worry about it.

You might want to spend five minutes and run some sand paper over the edges and along the top of your cut outs. Don't spend any major time on this part, as it'll all be covered by foam and vinyl. You just don't want any blatant splinters sticking up that may potentially snag your fabric later.



Cutting Your Race Track

Here we're cutting the race track. Now careful note. This part **will show** when you're playing so measure and cut carefully.

For our race tracks we measured 7" inside our nicer piece of wood (a nicer pine that had a better grain). This will allow for our rail to hang over after it's covered with foam and vinyl.

Start your cut on the **inside** of your wood. Drill out a small hole to start your jig saw. The inner part of your cut will be covered by more foam and felt as your playing surface, so it's not important that the cut is noticeable.

Just be careful once you start your cutting.



Here I am cutting out the race track.

Remember this piece of wood is going to be visible to your players and guests. Try not to deviate too far from your measurements.

You do have room for error, but try not to go into that area. The piece of wood that you're cutting from will be used as the center insert.

These two pieces will fit back together flush once you're done with foaming and felting the center insert.

When cutting it's a good idea to mark your sides on your cutout and on your center playing surface. You can pencil mark on the bottom of your rail that you're cutting out.

This way you won't spend any time trying to figure out which ways your pieces fit back together when you're putting all the parts back together.

Since we were cutting multiple tables at the same time, we just labeled our pieces with X or Y markings.



Here I am once the completed race track has been cut out.

Again when cutting make sure you have support on all sides so this piece doesn't fall down onto the floor and break. This is going to be the most (only) piece of visible wood on your table, so you don't want any largely noticeable imperfections.

Our X and Y marks are on the bottom of this piece (don't mark on top).



Here's a view of our first race track with the cup holders upside down.

We purchased our cup holders from www.smackdogg.com like many other sites.

They were a bit more pricey than most holders, but they're a larger size and will hold pretty much any beverage container. (including a full sized beer / coozie)

With 10 cup holders your spacing comes out to be 23 inches from outside lip of cup holder A to the outside lip of cup holder B.

Eight holders would have looked fine as well.



Here's another view of our table with cup holder spacing.



Padding your Rail

We got our foam from the same location Junell did for his table.

We couldn't find any places in the greater Omaha area that sold the dimensions we were looking for. We didn't want to do separate strips of foam and have to cut them all out in 8 inch strips. If you wanted to, I suppose you could, but we decided not to go that route.

We ordered our 54" wide by 108" long foam from A. A. S. R. in Houston Texas. Their number is 713-223-4474.

Due to the recent hurricanes the price of foam has more than doubled, and we ended up paying more than Junell did for his foam. Also, we didn't go with the HD (high density) foam that Junell did on his table, as it was even more expensive.

Any 1 inch foam you go with will be fine. We were more than happy with the "regular" foam.

I placed my order on a Monday and received my shipment on Wednesday.



Simply lay your rail upside down on top of your foam.

As you can see you have plenty of spare fabric around the curves of your rail. Center your rail the best you can.



On the outer part of your rail, measure a 1.5 inch outline. Your rail is 1.5 inches thick and you'll want at least that much foam to cover it.

On the inner rail we measured out a .75 inch mark. If you want you can put some of your scrap pieces of wood to work for you here. Since each plank of wood was .75 inches thick simply slap two together and you have a perfect 1.5 inch thick measuring tool. High tech, eh?



Here's a close up of our outline for our foam.



Here's a progress pic of our foam cutting. The outer portion has been cut away.

I'd suggest cutting outside your markings first. You lose some of the fabric when you attempt to wrap it around your rail. Cut outside your lines first to leave yourself some extra room. You can always remove more fabric later if you still have too much on.

If you also want to get your money's worth, you could take a quick nap, or as Cory opted for, have a "special" moment with yourself. Hey, it's your foam right?



Here's a pic of the entire outline of the foam cut out.

Notice we left plenty of room outside of our arcs. We didn't want to be short on foam when we attempt to wrap it with the vinyl, so we left room for error.

There were places we needed to cut more from, but we'd rather have too much than too little.



Run a quick coating of spray adhesive onto the wood and the foam.

I just bought the cheapest spray I could find that stated it worked with foam and wood (most of them do).

When spraying onto your materials, make sure you align your wooden frame up with your foam where you want it to dry. If you glue your wood frame down in the wrong spot, it's not going to be easy to remove and start over.

Let it dry for about 10 to 15 minutes, and turn your rail over (so the foam is on top).

Do a spot check along the rail by trying to gently lift the foam. If it comes up more than it should, glue that bad boy back down again.



With the left insert foam you cut out, you could make yourself a groovy pair of wings for that next Halloween party.

Or just look like a dork.

Remember.....beer and drinking makes this process a lot more fun. Don't be shy. A mini bar and refrigerator near your working area is always a plus.



Adding the Vinyl to your Rail

Lay your now glued foam and rail (upside down) onto your stretched out vinyl.

You can get vinyl pretty much anywhere (Jo Ann's, Hobby Lobby, Hancock Fabric). You'll want about 3 yards to cover your rail.

Center your rail the best you can.

You'll want to do some "pre-staple" testing. Just make sure your vinyl will come up over your foam and leave you enough to staple it down into your rail.



Start by stapling the outer curves.

Simply wrap your vinyl around and staple. As you move along, pull your vinyl, and run your hand along the bottom (top) of your rail to make sure it's fold and bubble free.

You'll probably want to use an electric stapler, since you're going to be using the better part of 500 staples to complete your rail.

Having a partner on this part is beneficial as well. One can pull the vinyl while the other staples.

As you move along, pull the vinyl towards your existing staples.



Here's the view from one end.

You'll notice folds and wrinkles along the side of your rail and that's fine. It's the top you need to be most worried about.

If you pull your vinyl tight and then staple, you'll be fine.



Here's a view with both ends of the rail completed.

Once you're that far, start along either outer edge and continue stapling away.

You'll want to take your time on this part, and check **frequently** for folds or bubbles. Just run your hand along the top of your rail before you staple.

If there's a bubble there, you'll notice it. Simply readjust your vinyl and staple. It's not a hard process, but is a bit time consuming since you want it to look nice.



Here's a view of our vinyl along the outer edge.

Notice that we only had about a quarter of an inch to staple to our rail.

This is more than adequate, and you don't need any hang over material anyway. Just make sure your vinyl has plenty of staples to hold it in place.



Once the outer edges are complete, you're free to cut out a square on the inner vinyl.

Leave yourself about four inches from the sides of your rail.

Also, you'll want to cut across where you initially hammered in your nail. The outer edges are a bit trickier, and require a bit more finesse.



You get the idea.



We didn't take any pics of our triangle cuts in order to wrap the vinyl around.

Detailed instructions can be found at Junell's site on his [vinyl installation](#).

If you need any further instructions, you can check out [pcpotato.com](#) and [his section](#) on vinyl.

We did have a tough time at first getting the inner arcs started. The vinyl will be tight, and it's normal. You'll just have to work with it and take your time. You obviously don't want to rush and possibly tear your material. I'd strongly suggest reviewing other websites on this step.

After we stapled down our inner vinyl, we simply cut away the excess, and you're left with the pic on the left.

If done right, your fingers will be sore from stretching and holding vinyl in place to be stapled.

Here's an over head view of what you're going to be looking at.

Tip: We didn't have a heavy duty industrial electric stapler, and due to budget constraints had to deal with a \$29 model from Lowes.

It probably won't hurt to have a hammer near by so you can give those stubborn staples a little extra push.

Again, we used around 500 for each rail we constructed.



Here's a pic of the finished rail from the side.

I must say, it's pretty damn nice for two schmoes who don't know too much about construction or building anything. There weren't any wrinkles or folds on the visible portion of the rail, and in our estimates was perfect.

The foam gave the perfect amount of push back, and is rather comfortable.



Cutting out your Cup Holders

Here we are starting the cutting our cup holder holes.

Start off by placing your finished rail upon your race track. Your markings should match up, and it should fit without too much trouble. Lay your cup holders out with your rail on top of your race track.

Simply trace out a circle of where you want your holders to be. You might have to "eye" it on your race track before you cut. It's just a matter of trial and error before you find everything aligned.

Junell said he used a jig saw for his work, but frankly that idea didn't appeal to us.

First of all, a jig saw takes a lot more time and effort, and we didn't have 6 hours to cut out holes when a drill and circular saw bit could do the job in a matter of minutes.

If you don't have the firepower available, you can rent a 120 volt drill (seen to the left) for about \$24 a day from Home Depot or Lowes. (your standard drill won't have enough juice)

The saw I got was a 3 and 5/8 inch circumference. A perfect fit for our holes. The bit that attaches was a 6L from Lowes, and cost about \$16. I believe the saw attachment was just over \$15.

Expensive, maybe. But well worth the time spent. (or so we thought).

Here I am starting the first hole.



The only suggestion I can offer is try a few practice holes in any scrap you have laying around. You don't want to scratch up your race track as it's going to be blatantly visible when you put your table back together.

Hold the damn thing steady and try to saw into your wood (heh) at a perpendicular angle.

It will probably take a few tries before you find out what speed the drill, saw and wood all work best together.

Just go around your table, and working on one hole at a time.



Here's a pic of the completed race track with all cup holder slots cut out.

Obviously it's covered in saw dust but you get the idea of what kind of spacing you're looking at.



We then took the baseboard and put our now cut race track on top.

After a careful alignment check, we traced out our cup holder holes. Then continue to saw out the holes in the same fashion as you did for the race track.

You have plenty of room for error on this piece, as it will never be visible to your guests. The baseboard just needs some cutouts as well so the holders will glide into your completed table without any problem. We also trimmed off a the edge which was also traced from our race track. This way our table will look flushed when put together.



Now a word of Caution:

We purchased a hole saw (with a brand name that starts with an L) for our drill, and 6L bit attachment. I can't say enough how you need to **stay away** from that brand if you want to cut your holes in the same method we did. The damn thing wouldn't stay on our drill after a few holes. We looked and tried to tighten the bit, but the damn pegs would not stay attached to our saw.

Okay, fine. Maybe it was a fluke. So we took the entire unit back and exchanged for the same product brand new. This time we got through maybe five holes (out of forty). Go with Black and Decker.

Padding your center insert

Here I am cutting our foam that will be glued onto our center inserts.

We decided to spend a few extra bucks and go with a quarter inch spill resistant foam. After all, we've put enough effort, time and energy into the tables, so we don't want the playing surface ruined by a spilled drink.

We found our foam at [Just Fabric](#) in Omaha, so that was one item we didn't need to specialty order.

Our material was just the right size for two inserts, so there wasn't a lot of room for error in the cutting.

We just wanted enough material to cover the surface, and weren't going to wrap any foam around the inserts for the same reason Junell chose. We didn't know if there'd be enough room with the foam wrapping around to comfortably get the insert to fit. Like Junell this was just our choice.



Here's a pic of the playing surface cutouts laying on top of their respective foam pieces.

Nothing too special there.



Here's a side view showing the foam on top of our wooden insert.

We just used some spray adhesive on the foam surface as well as the wood, and put both together. Make sure you don't have any air bubbles or folds in your foam as you glue it down. That would obviously be bad.

We did find that we had a lot of checking, and re-gluing to finish. There were quite a few spots that came up since we didn't have enough adhesive sprayed on certain spots.

Just keep gluing the foam down if it wants to peel up in certain spots.

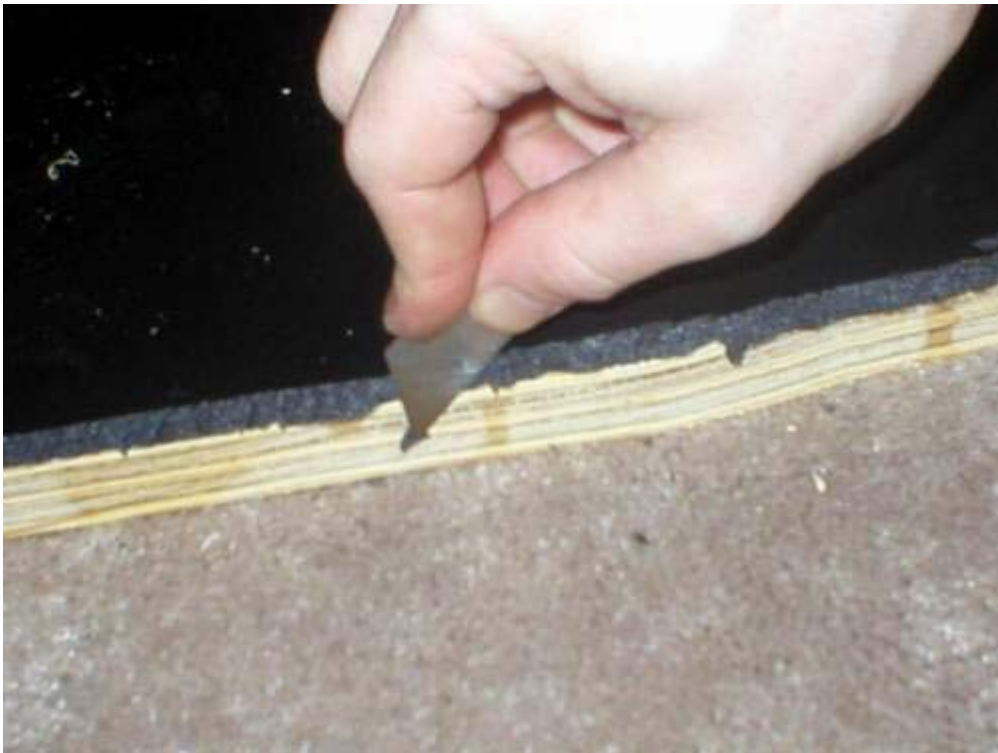
We found that the corners were the most difficult. So, we'd use shoes, hands, and feet to hold down sections that wanted to peel.

Don't be shy with the adhesive.



Use a razor blade to trim up any excess foam coming off your insert.

Don't rush during this part, and try to make your foam as flush to the wood as possible. This will pay off when you cover your surface with your material.



Covering your center insert

We couldn't find many websites that actually talked about adding your fabric for your center playing surface.

It's much like the rail you completed earlier.

Simply lay out your fabric to cover your center playing surface.

We started with the arcs and pulled our fabric tight, and stapled. When stapling along the rest of your insert, pull the fabric tight, and go slowly. Much like the rail, the more time you spend on this piece, the better the end result will look.

And again, don't be afraid to use staples.

The pic to the left is Cory's insert, and he went with a royal purple. The material was a stretched velveteen. The fabric did stretch quite a bit, so we had to make sure to pull the fabric really tight before stapling.



Our staple gun was the cheapest electric gun Lowes had to offer, so we had quite a few staples that were stubborn and only went about half way into the wood and material.

Just take a hammer and check for staples that need a little extra push.

Once completed, cut away any excess material (in this case, quite a bit).



Once your insert is completed, it's mandatory to have a celebratory drink.

I just follow the rules, I didn't make them up.

Here's a pic of my table insert. I went with a regular black casino poker table felt. You can find them at any number of poker table supply sites online.

My material was a regular velveteen and wasn't stretched.

As you can see, I obviously went with black.

We followed the same steps as we did with Cory's. Take it slow, and start with your arcs on your staples. Pull it tight and check for air pockets or folds where they shouldn't be.



Here's our insert totally covered and stapled down. Again you get the idea that you don't need to be afraid to use a lot of staples.

When in doubt, stable more.

Notice the light "2X" we have marked on the insert. Again, make sure your parts are all properly marked so you can save some time putting them all back together when you're finished.



Your insert should look something like this once the material is all cut away.



Your insert should now be completed. Make sure there are no hugely obvious folds on the **top** of your playing surface. If there are folds that wrap around, no big deal. They won't be seen.

And again, it's the rule to have a drink once you're completed with the insert.

Again, I didn't make the rules, I just follow

Attaching your table legs

For our table legs, we just went with the basic replacement legs that we bought from Lowes. I think they were about \$19.99 for a set.

The box said you would need 16 3/4" screws, so we purchased those separately. Of course when we opened the box, they were included.

For our tables, we just measured equal distance from each side, and verified our markings.

Attaching the legs were simple enough. Each set of legs were screwed in by 8 separate spots. Measuring out your proper alignment took more time than actually drilling in your screws.

Also, you might want to give your base a quick sanding around the outer edges. You don't want anyone getting snagged.



Here's a side view of our base with our legs attached.



Cory feeling proud of himself and his accomplishment.

One word of advice. The legs fold out in a particular direction, just make sure that your support and locking mechanism is facing the right way. Otherwise when you unfold your legs, it won't lock properly.

You'll find yourself unscrewing a set of legs just to flip it over and re-screw.



Here's a pic of the base now with attached table legs.

You want your measurements to be as close to perfect as possible, but don't worry if they don't match 100% on all sides. There may be some variance due to the wood shape itself, or any cuts or sanding you've done.

The legs should be pretty close to touching when folded up.



Both bases for both tables, now with table legs attached.

Junell said he cut a few inches off the table legs, but we were pleased with the height, and didn't want to mess with cutting any metal.



Oh wait a minute!

After attaching the legs, and then laying our race track on top, we found out we had attached our legs on the wrong side of our base. The cup holder cut outs weren't aligning like they should with the race rack.

We turned the base over, and sure enough, we had screwed into the incorrect side. So we had to unscrew our legs, turn the base over, and do the process over again. We made this mistake on both tables.

Also, another tip. The screws that are included with your table legs are pretty wimpy. We popped the top off of two of them, and weren't trying too hard. There was also a screw that didn't have the grooves cut out.

It's not a bad idea to have a few 3/4 inch screws laying around in case you run into the same problem.



Polyurethane

We just followed Junell's directions concerning applying polyurethane to the race tracks.

We didn't go over the race track with any mineral spirits to prep the wood, however. Just just dusted off the track with a regular cloth to remove any lingering sawdust.

Then just start adding coats to your track. Seen the left is coat number two of one race track.

Apply the poly with the grain, and give it adequate time to dry before applying another coat. Like Junell we gently sanded the race track between coats after it's dry.

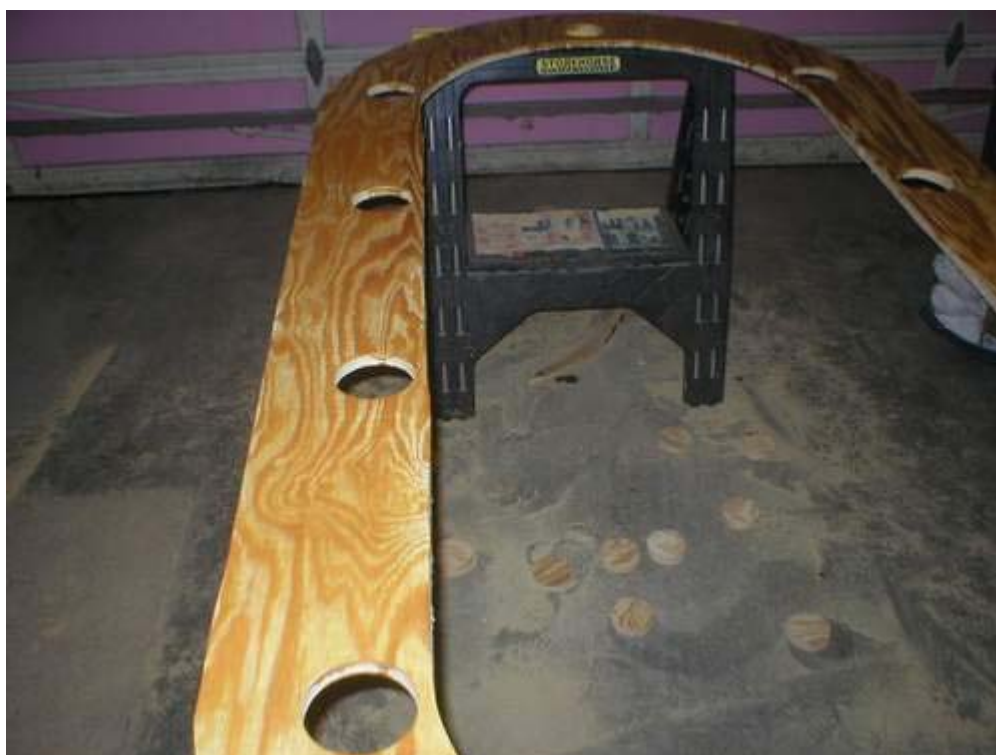
Increase the coarseness of your sand paper after each coat. You're not going to be sanding very hard, just a quick once over to remove any bubbles, or snags will be more than enough.

After the 5th coat, we used a piece of steel wool to gently glide over any apparent snags.



Here's a pic of one race track with two coats of poly applied.

Your wood will start to show a reddish, or amber color as you apply the polyurethane.



Here's a close up of the arc.



Here's the same race track above after the 5th coat has dried.

You can do more coats if you want, but this was adequate for our needs. Both tracks turned out nicely.

I'd suggest coating your race track while completing other projects. If you have your race track cut out, add a coat of poly and then go work on your rail. If it takes you a few hours to get your rail finished, you might be able to add the next coat of poly.

Then work on your center insert and your felt cover.

Granted, the stuff does take a while to dry (especially the first coat), but work on other projects while your race track is drying. No need to hold up your entire project and sit around watching it dry.

Now it's just a matter of putting your table together.



The Finished Product

Here's an overhead of Cory's finished table. The "ripples" you see towards the top are due to the way the light was hitting the table in the garage where we were assembling.



Side view of everything put together.

You may find that your cup holders will need a little bit of extra sanding in either the baseboard or racetrack to get a perfect fit. Some went in without any problem, while others were more stubborn. Just do this by hand, as it probably won't take too much.

Also, we had portions of our rail that were more difficult to fit onto our table. We just ran an electric sander along the outer edge of our race track, and tried again.

It takes quite a bit of trial and error, but if you've cut properly and used the same wood pieces, it'll go. Just keep playing until it latches.



Another side view of the finished table.

We didn't attach the rail to the table, but did screw the race track and the center insert to the baseboard from the bottom.

We used 1.25 inch screws. When we put the insert playing surface onto the table it came up just a hair on each end. After putting in a screw at each end, the insert was completely flush with the rest of the table.

