

GYS Welding Products Deliver Great Value to IL's Crash Champions



by Autobody News Staff

Crash Champions began as *New Lenox Auto Body* in 1999, but after 15 years of owning a small collision repair facility, President and CEO **Matt Ebert** bought out his partner because he wanted to expand the business and bring high-quality repairs to other towns near Chicago.

Ebert renamed the company to embody his goal of being champions for his customers and opened additional locations. Currently, there are seven *Crash Champions* facilities in Illinois.

With 137 employees repairing an average of 1,000 vehicles monthly and nine DRPs, it's important that the 160,000 square feet of production space at all of the *Crash Champions* locations is stocked with the best equipment in the industry for the business's success.

"Technology is advancing, and with it, the need for training and equipment is coming at a much faster pace than it used to," Ebert said. "The technician shortage pushes their pay higher, while we also contend with increasing training and equipment costs to ensure we keep up with the changing needs of vehicles today and we have what we need to properly repair vehicles as they change. To have our shops continue to do well in the future, we have to make sure we keep up with all of these changes in the present."

These advancements in vehicles include changes in materials by many OEMs as they strive to create lighter weight vehicles without compromising durability and safety. As a company that has acquired 10 OEM certifications with more in progress, *Crash Champions* knows that obtaining the right equipment for the job is essential.

"After doing some extensive research on many equipment suppliers and OE requirements, we decided to invest in multiple GYS products," said **Pete Callaway**, one of the directors at *Crash Champions*. "We use the GYS Neopulse 300 T-2 pulse welder for our aluminum and silica bronze needs. The GYSPOT Inverter Spot Welder is [also] great because it has many arms that are quickly changeable, plus it can perform a self-calibration."



Founded as a single location in 1999, *Crash Champions* has expanded to become a seven-location MSO since 2014 (Pictured: Plainfield location, opened in May 2017).

Combining power and ergonomics, the Neopulse 300 T-2 is a double pulse mig/mag 270A welding machine featuring connectors for push/pull and spoolgun torches, plus two integrated wire feeders that enable one of two wire types consecutively. It also features two bottle supports for two different types of gas. The GYSPOT Inverter Spot Welder, a single-sided gun that is lightweight and easy to handle, is ideal for welding requirements of high-strength steels with 550 daN electrode arms force at eight bars and 13,000 amps of welding current.

Crash Champions also purchased a GYS Speedliner Combi 230 Deluxe Steel and Aluminum Dent Repair Station, designed for any size repair, which allows them to remove dents without disassembling vehicle fittings and to repair without replacing.

According to Callaway, "The Speedliner Combi dent repair kit has really expedited the repair process and assisted us in repairing panels that would have required replacement in the past. It reduces downtime and improves profitability."

Founded in 1964, GYS is a French family-owned group that operates worldwide. The company engineers, designs and sells arc welding, collision repair and automotive battery service equipment.

"**Mike Hildebrand** and his team at GYS are committed to excellent customer service and have executed other projects with which we've tasked them," Callaway said. "The transition to the new equipment was seamless, and after the initial equipment installation, Precision Equipment Systems has visited

our shops several times to deliver continuous training.

"The employees at *Crash Champions* are extremely happy with GYS Welding's equipment and are working more efficiently as a result. With the ease of use, quality and service, I can say the GYS products, along with the support we receive from Mike Hildebrand's team, make the purchases a great value!"

Ebert hopes to provide value at each *Crash Champions* location.

"We are a local MSO with an owner who is very involved every day," Ebert stated. "We work hard to be able to provide the same efficiencies as the national MSOs, but we offer the benefit of being small enough that our employees and customers never become 'just a number.' We strive to ensure that all of our new facilities are inviting for customers and set up for an easy workflow. I want to provide facilities and a working environment where customers want to do business, insurance and dealer partners want to send their employees, and just as importantly, people want to work for us."

Crash Champions actively supports its local community by hosting an annual golf event to benefit the Make a Wish program in Illinois. The shop also collaborated with One Warm Coat to collect more than 100 winter coats for the less fortunate. The facilities also make an effort to be environmentally friendly. Each location sprays with PPG waterborne paints and the newer locations are all energy compliant, boasting LED lighting and comprehensive recycling initiatives.

Crash Champions

Location: New Lenox, IL
(877) 846-9500
www.crashchampions.com

Company At A Glance...

Type: MSO
Facility Employees: 137
In Business Since: 1999
Number of Locations: Seven
DRP Programs: Nine
Combined Production Space: 160,000 square feet



Crash Champions has found that GYS Welding's products offer a great value, promoting efficiency and profitability.



"The Speedliner Combi dent repair kit has really expedited the repair process and assisted us in repairing panels that would have required replacement in the past," said **Pete Callaway**, director of *Crash Champions*.

GYS Welding USA

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