

The „Twilight Zone“ Pinball Machine's Bumper Caps Order

Hallo Fellow Twilight Zone Owners,

I currently own TZ 50220151721, built June 11th, 1993. Having compared the order of my bumper caps with the pictures of The International Pinball Database (<http://www.ipdb.org>), I wondered if there would be some „standard“ or „correct“ setup.

First, I needed some time to convince myself that the manual was actually correct: it states three (not two) different colors: tr. yellow, tr. red, tr. amber (see page 2-39). The abbreviation „tr.“ means „translucent“, as far as I know. Optically, I first only saw a yellow and two red caps on my machine. But knowing there must be a difference between the red caps, I looked very closely and right: one red cap was a little brighter, tending into orange just a bit.

I have never ordered a red or an amber cap from Williams, so I don't know which color name actually matches the color I see. Therefore, I will assume that the „amber“ cap actually is the „orange“ (the brighter) cap. Interestingly, Twilight Zone has red-orange-yellow zones near the plunger and on the „Power Field“; so I never heard anybody talk of an „amber“ cap.

To make things even more confusing, I think the machine depicted on the flyer has a „real“ orange cap, not an amber one.

I first wrote an e-mail to Ted Estes, one of the Twilight Zone designers. He told me that he personally had no recollection of decisions made for the jet bumper cap color positions, so he asked Larry DeMar and Par Lawlor. Larry said he had no recollection either, but made up a theory that would match the prototype (Red upper left, Orange upper right, Yellow lower). Pat, however, had a more practical approach: he said one should use the flyer as a guide for the correct positioning, since he thinks it is correct (as you know: Red upper left, Yellow upper right, Orange lower).

This was not satisfactory, of course- having two contradicting opinions on that. I then saw an export Twilight Zone to be sold on eBay (article 739559761). It was said to be a Home Use Only machine; so I asked the owner if he uncrated the machine and what the color set-up was when he did.



Bernhard, the owner, told me he never changed the bumper caps and they were in the original order. As we can clearly see, they match the flyer!

To be completely sure, I also asked RGP (<news://rec.games.pinball>) regular Lloyd Olson if he uncrated his Twilight Zone. He told me that he was there two times when a Twilight Zone machine was uncrated. One Twilight Zone exactly matches the description of the picture above. The other one was a very early prototype machine, and Lloyd told me that the lower cap was actually not orange-like at all, but pinkish! He called the color „grapefruit“.

So the bottom line is that the flyer picture is the correct source of information here. There is a red cap at the upper left, and a yellow one at the upper right. The other cap is mounted below.

It's still not clear to me why they had this „red-orange-yellow“ order in the game, but did not put „orange“ caps in most of the games but „amber“ ones (or even pinkish ones). I guess Bally was out of orange caps – maybe someone knows more about this?

Hope this helps the Twilight Zone community a little,
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