



Using IoT to Level the Playing Field in Baseball

The Internet of Things (IoT) technology wave is impacting our world in a very big way. From connecting PLCs and sensors in manufacturing to improve efficiency and visibility into operations. To connected product from consumer products, like smart ovens and fridges to connected industrial equipment, products have become “smart”. IoT has even started to weave itself into America’s game — “Baseball”. We started working on a project in 2020 to help baseball level the playing field by using IoT technology in the 100+ year old process of mudding baseballs.

I’m not sure everyone knows the history so I’ll provide some context. The practice of applying mud to the baseball started after the 1920 rule change. Baseball tried different mixtures of water, soil, shoe polish, and tobacco among other solutions to try and remove the slippery film that comes with new baseballs. So let’s fast forward to today’s mudding process. The mud applied comes from the Delaware River and is produced by the Lena Blackburne Baseball Rubbing Mud company. When applied to the baseball, it soaks right into the surface without dribbling off, improving the grip without creating too much discoloration. The process as instructed is to scoop two fingertips’ worth of mud, paint it across the entire surface of the baseball and then rub the baseball in between both hands for no more than 40 seconds.

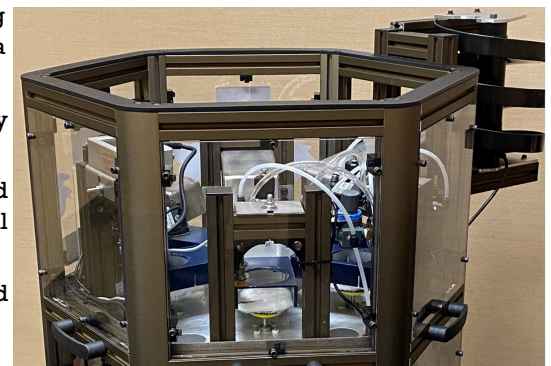
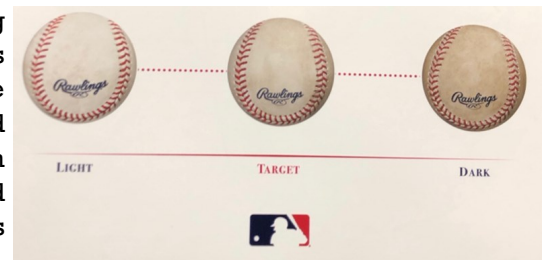
The Challenge

Since the 1950s, the challenge has always been is the “correct” mudding amount being applied consistently? Baseball has a standard that needs to be met, however it has always been subjective and at the sole discretion of the Home Club. This results in different standards and potentially different game outcomes based on this subjective / decision by each individual ballclub. So how does baseball regain control and ensure that all baseballs used regardless of which park the game is being played are mudded equal to create a level playing field?

Solution

Development of a repeatable, consistent and certified process for mudding baseballs. How can we accomplish this? The elements to make this solution a reality involved the implementation and integration of:

- Automate the process of applying this Magic Mud to the baseball by utilizing digitally controlled spray guns
- Certifying that each baseball going through the process meets the standard for the finished baseball by incorporating Digital Imaging, Artificial Intelligence for millisecond comparison and control
- Automated Controls and IoT Technology for gathering, certifying and providing certification artifacts to baseball teams and organizations



Join our Webinar on Tuesday January 31st at 2:30PM EST to learn more!

RSVP

Next Month: Going from PDM to PLM to drive your Digital Transformation