

COMMUNITY COLLEGE'S SPORTS LAUNDRY SYSTEM THWARTS SPREAD OF INFECTION



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Walla Walla Community College (WWCC), in Walla Walla, Wash., recently installed a new athletic laundry system engineered to thwart the spread of infection in the wash. The Sports Laundry System, which replaced a failing hard-mount washer and dryer, not only kills viruses and bacteria in the wash, it improves laundry productivity and eliminates over-drying and resulting damage to uniforms, according to Tim Toon, head volleyball coach and chair of the Physical Education Dept.



WWCC's Dietrich Activity Center

Installed in May 2013, the Sports Laundry System is proven in clinical studies to kill 99.9 percent of bacteria and viruses, including staph and antibiotic-resistant MRSA. WWCC's SLS handles the athletic laundry of 10 teams. It properly cleans everything from loops, shorts, pants and sweats, to uniforms, towels, kneepads and shin guards.

Because it disinfects, the System works to prevent the spread of infection from contaminated laundry to athletes. In doing so, it helps keep student athletes healthy for practices, workouts and game days.

"The Sports Laundry System is one of the most critical steps we have taken to ensure the health of our student athletes as it relates to the cleanliness of our practice and game uniforms," said Jeff Reinland, athletic director.

Infection Threat in the Locker Room

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recently published "Antibiotic Resistance Threats in the United States, 2013," which warns the public of a number of hard-to-treat pathogens, including MRSA. MRSA, or Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*, according to the publication, "causes a range of illnesses, from skin and wound infections to pneumonia and bloodstream infections that can cause sepsis and death." Staph bacteria, including MRSA, are among the most common causes of healthcare-associated infections, according to the CDC. Such infections can also plague athletic locker rooms, where players come into frequent contact with each other, as well as contaminated laundry and surfaces. Once infected, athletes can't participate

in practices or games until the infection is resolved.

By embracing an SLS, WWCC is working to ensure that players stay healthy, uniforms are properly cleaned and dirty laundry doesn't lie about.

Doing More Laundry in Less Time

SLS completes more laundry in less time, when compared to typical laundry solutions, according to Greg Tompkins, of Integrity Laundry Solutions LLC in Walla Walla, Wash. Tompkins worked with WWCC to select, install and program the new System.

It features a high-speed washer that produces extract speeds of up to 354 G-force, whereas a typical hard-mount washer outputs extract speeds of just 75-200 G-force. "More water is removed



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per load as extract speeds increase,” explained Tompkins. “Because the Sports Laundry System removes considerably more water than most other laundry solutions, it shortens resulting dry time by up to 40 percent. This greatly improves laundry productivity.” For WWCC, heightened productivity means more laundry is completed in less time. And that’s a good thing because WWCC processes six to 12 40-pound laundry loads per day.

“With the new system, washing time is reduced by 25 percent and things are coming out of the washer almost dry because the spin cycle is dramatically better,” added Toon. Now, uniforms are washed, disinfected and dried in just 40 minutes. Meanwhile, towels are completed in 50 minutes.

Using the College’s old laundry equipment, volleyball, basketball, softball and baseball uniforms were hung and air-dried overnight. “Now, they air dry in just three or four hours,” said Toon.

Programs For Each Item

But, improved productivity is merely the tip of the benefits iceberg. WWCC craved a highly programmable laundry solution, as well. Their SLS allows them to properly

clean and disinfect items according to fabric washing guidelines. A flexible control allowed Tompkins to design cleaning programs to perfectly fit the individual needs of various items. That way, loops, towels, jerseys, uniforms and practice items are washed with the right blend of ozone, water temperatures, rotation speed, water levels, cleaning chemicals, and extract speed. It couldn’t be simpler for student workers to do the laundry. “They load the washer, punch in a program number specific to item type, and press start. It’s really easy,” said Toon.

Ozone Impact

Once a load of laundry is started, SLS disinfects by introducing ozone into the sump of each wash at precisely the right time and water temperature.

Ozone is a powerful and safe cleaning agent that helps break up organic matter during the wash process and uses mostly cool water. It contributes greatly to overall efficiency and results, according to Tompkins, and ensures items are disinfected.

“We washed three-year-old towels using our new system and it breathed new life into them,” added Toon. “In just one

wash, the towels looked nearly new, were clean and felt soft.”

Tompkins agrees. “In one wash, dingy practice pants came out really clean and white. Because items are cleaner and experience less wear and tear in the dryer, they will also last longer – ultimately saving the College money.”

A Perfect Dry

The icing on the cake? Tumble-dried items won’t experience damage due to over drying. “On one or two occasions we had fires when things dried too hot,” said Toon. “There were melted and ruined uniforms. Now we don’t have to worry about a dryer running too long. It automatically shuts off.”

This is because the SLS dryer features Linen Life Extension (LLE), a programmable system that senses the moisture content of each load and shuts the dryer off when the load reaches its targeted dryness level.

Find out more about WWCC at www.wwcc.edu. Discover more about Sports Laundry Systems at www.sportslaundrysystems.com, or call 920-230-8550. Learn more about Integrity Laundry Solutions at www.integritylaundrysolutions.com or call 800-490-3989.



The Sports Laundry System disinfects laundry—thwarting the spread of disease.