

Utah Tech University Ups Laundry Game as It Enters Division I

By Haley Jorgensen



Athletic
Laundry Profile

When Utah Tech University (Utah Tech) athletics recently jumped from NCAA Division II to Division I, the University got serious about how it processed athletic laundry. Both the football and baseball programs invested in new laundry technology that delivers improved cleaning results, halves laundry processing time and nearly eliminates re-washes — even when the Trailblazers' white baseball pants mix with the red dirt of St. George, Utah.

Sports Laundry Systems in Football & Baseball Facilities

The new Sports Laundry Systems® (SLS) are located inside Utah Tech's football and baseball stadiums. The football stadium — charged with cleaning laundry for 108 student-athletes — features a 40- and 2 60-pound capacity soft-mount washers paired with a 55- and 2 75-pound capacity dryers. The baseball stadium — with 40 players — touts a 40-pound capacity hard-mount washer and 55-pound capacity dryer.

Washer Programmability Improves Results, Nearly No Rewashes

Wayne Hoppal of Reliable Commercial Laundry Sales, in St. George, worked closely with Utah Tech to size, install and program the laundry equipment. Programmed by item type, the washers automatically inject the right cleaning chemicals, brighteners and softeners into the washers. Those chemicals synch seamlessly with the correct water levels, water temperatures and mechanical action to ensure uniforms, warmups, towels and loops are properly cleaned. Operators simply load, select a program number that coincides with item type and press start.

"Now we do all game jerseys and pants in-house and they come out cleaner and whiter than when we used to send them out," said Football Equipment Manager Sheldon Prout. "It's a testament to what having a good laundry system can do for your school."

Simultaneously, rewashes are virtually eliminated, according to Prout and Baseball Equipment Manager Chris Pfatenhauer. "Using our old machine, we'd wash our white pants again and again — sometimes up to three or four times," said Pfatenhauer.

"We have not rewashed a load yet," added Prout. "Using our old washers, we sometimes rewashed loads three times to get laundry clean."

Saving Time Thanks to High-Extract Speeds

Today, the laundry process saves valuable time. That's a good thing since student-managers are often running the equipment. "We want our student-managers to be students first, but they are a big part of what we do," Prout said. "It makes us feel good knowing they don't have to spend the whole day doing laundry."

Instead, it takes about 30 minutes to wash and 30 minutes to dry most loads. This is because the washers generate high-extract speeds (up to 400 G-force) for maxed moisture removal during extract. By comparison lower speed washers and hard-mount washers can't sustain these high speeds, according to Hoppal, which is one of the big reasons Utah Tech opted for the softmounts.

Because items retain less moisture, they dry faster, added Prout. "There are times where



jerseys don't need to be dried," he said. "We usually hang them and let them quickly air-dry."

As for the rest of the laundry, it's finished in one of the SLS Dryers with Uniform Life Extension, a moisture-sensing system that prevents over-drying. Overall, the dryers operate less frequently — consuming less natural gas — thanks to the washers' high-extract speeds.

The new laundry system proved an asset to Utah Tech as it raised the bar into Division I athletics. It cut laundry time by 75 percent, and concurrently washed away Utah's red clay stains in one fell swoop.

Find out more about Sports Laundry Systems at sportslaundry.com or call 800-256-1073. Find out more about Utah Tech at utahtech.edu