

Cooperstown— A Haven for Good, 'Clean' Baseball



By Haley Jorgensen

During the Summer months, more than 1,200 12- and 13-year-olds flock to Cooperstown Dreams Park each week. The Park, located near Cooperstown, N.Y., offers baseball teams from around the country the ultimate bonding and baseball experience. Teams and coaches stay in one of 110 clubhouses in the Park's Baseball Village—a gathering area complete with a dining pavilion, photo center, concession stand, movie and arcade area, and seven bathhouses. Flanking the Baseball Village, 22 lit diamonds—with natural grass and red-dirt infields—promise unrivaled playing facilities.

An environmentally friendly place focused on unmatched service, Cooperstown Dreams Park provides the full Monty—lodging, entertainment and competitive baseball. In the interest of customer service, the Park also handles all visitor laundry—equating to 5,000 pounds of soiled team uniforms and personal items each day ...

A 'Green' Commitment

Since the park's inception in 1996, customer service and energy-efficiency have been paramount, maintains Managing Director Mike Walter. "All the field lights are high-efficiency and glare protected with internal louvers," he says. "We also have low-flow showerheads and automatic faucet shut-offs in the bathhouses, as well as an aggressive recycling program. We're always looking for better ways to improve efficiency."

Cooperstown Dreams Park delivers the full package, from morning breakfast to evening entertainment. Additionally, an outsourced laundry service has, until recently, provided teams with clean uniforms. "Our laundry service would take the laundry after each day's last game and bring it back by 7:30 the next morning," says Walter. "But our service suffered as

we grew, so we decided, in the interest of customer service, to tackle the laundry in-house."

Moving Laundry In-house

That's when a preexisting storage building was transformed into an on-site, energy-efficient laundry capable of handling more than 35,000 pounds of laundry each week. Key to the facility's success is a water reclamation system that filters used wash water for reuse. Also critical was the selection of energy-efficient Continental washer-extractors and dryers capable of efficiently cleaning a variety of items—uniforms, towels, sheets, blankets and players' personal items.

Selecting Soft-mount, Free-standing Washer-Extractors

To develop the laundry the right way, Walter turned to Ben Gauch of Gauch



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Distributing, in Rensselaer, N.Y. “We talked to a lot of laundry equipment distributors before settling on Gauch,” says Walter. “He was knowledgeable, visited often and helped us select the types of machines and hook-ups we needed.” Ultimately, the new on-premise laundry was equipped with eight 55-pound and two 130-pound capacity Continental soft-mount washer-extractors. The Park chose freestanding washers over traditional hard-mount washers for a number of reasons, according to Walter. Hard-mount machines require a thick concrete foundation and bolts for installation. The soft-mount washers don’t require either—helping lower installation costs. The new soft-mount washers slide into place without bolts, and can be easily relocated in the future if needed, according to Walter. They also offer efficiency, programmability and productivity.

Reduced Dry-time and Improved Productivity

“Continental soft-mount washers reach very high extract speeds, up to 387 G-force,” says Gauch. “Because soft-mount washers reach far greater extract speeds than hard-mount washers, they also remove considerably more water from every load. This can cut resulting dry time by 50 percent, lower natural gas consumption, and greatly improve the amount of laundry the facility can get done in a day.”

“The total time for uniforms to wash and dry is about 45 minutes, which means we can get a lot of laundry done in a short time,” says Walter.

Complementing the washers are five Continental 45-pound capacity stack dryers and two 75-pound capacity single-pocket dryers.

Water Reclamation Slashes Water Demand

A water recycling system was also installed in the laundry to reduce the Park’s

well water usage. The water recycling system works with a series of filters. “Water from the washers is dumped into a trough and pulled into the recycling system where impurities are removed through filters in the laundry’s holding tanks,” says Walter. “The washers use water from those tanks.” Walter estimates that the laundry recycles 80 percent of its water. Daily about 4,000 gallons of wastewater—the remaining water saturated with impurities—is removed by truck and delivered to a municipal wastewater treatment plant.

“We just select a program code and press start,” says Walter. “The washer automatically injects the correct type and amount of detergent based on the program number. It’s a no-brainer.”

A 24-hour Laundry Operation

“We run the laundry as a 24-hour operation,” says Walter. “Team uniforms are done by the night shift from 9 p.m. to 6 a.m.” The uniforms must be complete before each team’s first game the next day. Coaches simply drop off and pick up uniforms at a counter located in the corner of the Baseball Village dining pavilion—the ultimate customer service, according to Walter.

Meanwhile, the laundry’s day shift does the teams’ personal items, staff laundry, sheets and towels. “At night we have up to 18 people doing laundry, and during

the day we have around seven or eight people,” says Walter.

Using Multiple Washer Programs for Varying Items

In order to properly wash a variety of items, the Continental Washers are programmed to combine the optimum combination of cleaning chemicals, water temperature, rinses, baths, mechanical action and extract speeds. That way, no matter what items are being washed—baseball pants, towels, sheets—they are washed correctly every time, according to Walter. “We just select a program code and press start,” he says. “We don’t have to measure detergents and chemicals because the washer automatically injects the correct type and amount based on the program number. It’s a no-brainer.”

The new on-premise laundry has allowed Cooperstown Dreams Park to successfully serve customers in an environmentally friendly way, attests Walter. “Before, teams would sign up for laundry service that they paid for themselves,” he says. “Now, we do it in-house, paying the labor and machines to give the teams better service.”

To find out more, visit www.cooperstowndreamspark.com.



Cooperstown Dreams Park’s on-premise laundry processes 35,000 pounds of laundry each week.