

UW-Oshkosh Relies on Continental and Grandma for Clean Uniforms



The new Alumni Stadium at the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh includes all the bells and whistles, including an on-premise laundry featuring a Continental E-Series Washer-Extractor and matching Dryer.

By Haley Jorgensen

In the world of collegiate Division III baseball, Tom Lechnir is the Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Conference's (WIAC) all-time winningest coach, having led the University of Wisconsin-

Oshkosh (UW-O) Titans to 27 Conference championships and two NCAA Division III World Series championships. At the helm of the Titans baseball program since 1989, Lechnir mirrored the Titans' success in a recent and gargantuan effort culminating in the new Alumni Stadium; complete with all the bells and whistles, and of course, an on-premise laundry.

Arguably the person most pleased with the new baseball facility is Lechnir's 77-year-old mother, Barb – the team's self-appointed laundress. When she's not serving as "team grandma," Barb Lechnir works hard to ensure the players' uniforms, sweats, towels and undergarments are properly cleaned. Before the new Alumni Stadium—now equipped with a 30-pound capacity, soft-mount

Continental E-Series Washer-Extractor and drying tumbler—the laundry process was complicated, flawed and frustrating, she maintains.

Not anymore.

The New Alumni Stadium—Just for Baseball

The new baseball facility includes a state-of-the-art field equipped with scoreboard, 400 seats behind home plate and stadium lights – all the better for hosting WIAC and NCAA tournaments. The facility also offers multiple team conveniences, including a players' clubhouse with showers, pool table, big-screen television, laundry, bathroom, dugouts and lockers, as well as a media area, press box, concession stand and coach's office. The Alumni Stadium project—a \$1.2 million endeavor



Barb Lechnir, left, and Baseball Coach Tom Lechnir, right, stand on either side of their team's new 30-pound capacity E-Series Washer-Extractor. Barb handles all the laundry for the UW-O baseball team!



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—was spearheaded by Coach Lechnir and his baseball program. In tandem, they raised every dollar to fund their new “home field.”

For the first time, the Titans enjoy the creature comforts of their own space—a place to prepare for practices and games, and an area to clean up and unwind afterward. But the most popular new piece of equipment, according to Coach Lechnir, is the new on-premise washer. “It’s the envy of visiting teams,” he says.



The new Alumni Stadium comes complete with a new locker room, pool table and big-screen television!

Improved Laundry Equipment & Processes

The new 30-pound capacity Continental E-Series Washer-Extractor and Dryer clean the influx of dirty laundry generated by the 33-roster Titans baseball team. “The equipment is a tremendous help, considering the team is on dirt every day,” says Lechnir.

Prior to the new facility construction, the baseball team washed uniforms, sweats and undergarments in the UW-Oshkosh football team’s old hard-mount washer-extractor. A person was hired to do the laundry for the team, but the process was cumbersome.

“The baseball field is a quarter of a mile away from the football stadium so it was difficult to transport the dirty uniforms from one location to the other,” says Lechnir. “Without our on-site Continental washer we’d still be living that nightmare.”

“The uniforms looked terrible with really deep stains,” adds Barb Lechnir, who took over doing the wash two years ago. “The washer at the football stadium was really big, but it didn’t do a good job.”

Once Barb Lechnir captained as team laundress, and the Titans installed the new laundry equipment, uniforms changed for the better ...

Selecting a Continental Soft-mount Washer-Extractor

“I asked if the team could get new white pants because they were so stained and dingy, but it wasn’t in the budget,” she says. “So I used a spot stain remover and vinegar on them to get the stains out,

then washed them in the new washer. I was really pleased with how they came out of the machine.”

Daily, Barb Lechnir cleans practice uniforms, sweats and towels, along with mesh bags full of socks, jocks and undergarments. She also ensures stains are removed and uniforms are sparkling for game day. “I do not dry the uniforms; I hang them so the dryer doesn’t damage the numbers,” she says. That is one of the reasons the team chose a soft-mount washer over a hard-mount washer.

High-speed Extract Shortens Dry-time

The Continental E-Series Washer selected by the team is freestanding, and as a result, achieves extract speeds reaching 351 G-Force. Not only are E-Series Washers extremely energy-efficient—using less water, gas and electricity than comparable washers on the market—they remove considerably more water during extract. In turn, dry-time is reduced.

By comparison, 2-speed hard-mount washers must be bolted to a reinforced concrete foundation; reach extract speeds between 75 and 90 G-Force; extend the time it takes washed garments to dry; and are more costly to install.

Barb Lechnir reports that uniforms removed from the Continental soft-mount washer in the morning, air-dry by the afternoon. “Items pulled out of the new washer are very nearly dry,” agrees Coach Lechnir.

A load of towels, adds Barb, “dries in 15 to 20 minutes. I can’t believe how quickly I can do the laundry.”

Because items are more thoroughly cleaned using the Continental E-Series Washer, they also last longer, according to Coach Lechnir.

A Better Clean Contributes to Extended Uniform Life

“Uniforms are absolutely getting cleaner,” Coach Lechnir maintains. “We get our uniforms from Wilson and we aren’t good clients because we rarely have to buy new ones. Our Wilson representative is amazed at their long use. Usually washing takes something out of the uniforms, but now it seems to enhance them. One thing I was really surprised by was how the washer cleans delicates. We have pullover tops with embroidery and I hesitated washing them in the new washer. But, it seems like they come out better than before they went in.”

Longevity of the uniforms is important, Lechnir says, since one set goes for around \$100.

Programmability and Ease of Use

Key to the safe washing of delicates and uniforms is the E-Series highly programmable Logi Control. The Logi has eight individually modifiable programs. Most variables within each bath can be individually programmed, including wash temperature, water levels, rotation times, rotation speeds and G-force extract speeds. By using different programs, Barb Lechnir ensures different items are properly washed—at the right water temperature and level, and using the appropriate

mechanical action and extract speed, for example. But the control couldn’t be easier to use—she simply selects a program number and presses start.

Sometimes Barb Lechnir travels with the Titans to away games across the country. That’s when she misses the convenience of her



The locker room also features a new E-Series washer and dryer, which have successfully improved laundry productivity and wash quality.

on-premise laundry most. “I asked the guys, ‘Go see if any other teams bring their laundress to clean their uniforms at coin laundries when they are on the road,’” she laughs. “Last season, the team gave me a baseball signed by all of them, thanking me for doing their laundry!”

“She loves doing it,” says Coach Lechnir of his mother, “and we are grateful to her.” ▀