ALABAMA STATE INVESTS IN LAUNDRY DISINFECTION SYSTEM AND DOUBLES LAUNDRY PRODUCTION

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"Our old washer started breaking down and wasn't rinsing," said Alabama State University (ASU) Equipment Manager Dante Tyson-Bey. "The dryer didn't get laundry dry and smelly laundry kept piling up." That's when Tyson-Bey investigated the industry's newest athletic laundry solutions and spearheaded the replacement of the underperforming equipment. He's glad he did.

In November 2016, ASU, in Montgomery, Ala., installed a new Sports Laundry System® in its football complex. The system teams highly programmable washers with disinfecting ozone injection and high-performance dryers. Now Alabama State enjoys doubled laundry production, among many other perks.

Disinfection and Programmability

"It's unlike other laundry systems because it safely cleans and disinfects helmets and pads, as well as uniforms, towels and loops," said Russ Arbuckle of Wholesale Laundry Equipment S.E., a full-service laundry equipment distributorship, in Southside, Ala. Arbuckle worked with the ASU to select, size and install the system.

"The Sports Laundry System works by introducing ozone gas into the sump of the washer and monitors the level of ozone during the complete cycle," said Arbuckle. "Should the ozone level drop below the parts per million level recommended by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the system increases ozone input until that level is satisfied. The Sports Laundry System patented ozone validation system measures both contact time and parts per million to ensure CDC guidelines are met." Ozone is a safe cleaning agent that disinfects laundry using mostly cool water, while eliminating 99.9 percent of viruses, superbugs and bacteria in the wash. "This helps prevent the spread of infection among athletes," he said.

Tyson-Bey concurs. "The ozone is one of the best things on the market to kill staph and MRSA," he said. A side benefit is the freshness it brings. "Our athletic laundry used to smell sour even when it was clean," said Tyson-Bey. "Now it smells wonderful; my student athletes notice its freshness too."

Washer Programmability & Cleaning Helmets/Pads

Meanwhile, washer programmability of rotation action and extract speeds allow Tyson-Bey to safely clean and disinfect helmets and pads, in addition to loops, towels, uniforms and practice gear. Arbuckle established cleaning programs to perfectly fit the individual needs of various items. In doing so, the washer combines the right blend of ozone, water temperatures, rotation speed, number of baths and rinses, water levels, cleaning chemicals and extract speeds. It couldn't be simpler for student workers to do the laundry, according to Tyson-Bey. "You just load, enter a program number and press start," he said.

By cleaning and disinfecting helmets and pads in-house, Alabama State is also better prepared for National Operating Committee on Standards for Athletic Equipment (NOCSAE) recertification. Typically this process involves a reconditioning/recertification company taking helmets and pads through a number of steps, including inspection, cleaning, sanitizing, buffing/painting and repairs before equipment achieves NOCSAE Certification. Through in-house cleaning and disinfection, ASU may outsource fewer steps in that process for significant cost savings, according to Tyson-Bey.

ASU Equipment manager, Dante Tyson-Bey

Catapulting Laundry Production

It's helped, he said, that "the new Sports Laundry System has cut drying time in half. We used to complete two loads of laundry per day. Now, we process five loads a day." This is thanks to the system's 60-pound capacity soft-mount washer. It generates extract speeds of up to 400 G-force, whereas a typical hard-mount washer outputs extract speeds of just 75-150 G-force, according to Arbuckle. Higher G-force greatly and proportionately impacts production. "More water is removed per load as extract speeds increase," he said. Thus, more moisture is removed from each load, which cuts dry time by up to 50 percent. "This reduced drying time also greatly reduces the wear-and-tear on uniforms caused by the heat and friction of the drying cycle," said Arbuckle. "Another benefit to reduced wear-and-tear is longer life expectancy of the uniforms."

Tyson-Bey is grateful for the time and cost savings. "Loads were absolutely taking too long to dry," he said. "A load of uniforms took 75 minutes to wash and dry with our old equipment. Now it takes 30 minutes." By doubling production, Tyson-Bey has more time to focus on other responsibilities. Meanwhile, the laundry area is free of contaminated laundry piles.

Discover more about ASU at www.alasu.edu.

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