

LET'S PLAY BALL!

Baseball devices make life easier for scorekeepers

Improvements in
record keeping reflect
growing technology

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One of the key features of modern society is the widespread impact of technology. Just as it has other

they're all used in the same way."

Also relevant to baseball, for both fans and the players, is the radar gun that records pitching speeds. The ideas surrounding this contraption, however, do not necessarily

aspects of commercial businesses, this influential movement has also penetrated the world of baseball with such devices as the automated scorebook and radar gun. Utilizing a computer, the automated scorebook (TAS) is a program issued by Stat Crew Software, Inc. in Cincinnati, Ohio. It was designed to aid in the compilation of team scores and statistics and lessen all the work that previously accompanied the handwritten records.

"It just makes things so much easier," said Jerry Trickie, assistant sports information director.

"You can put in a player's name, position and different scores and the computer saves it until it needs to be calculated later."

Trickie travels with ECU's baseball team to every game and has certainly sensed the advantages of this scoring method. Though TAS is popular among other sports such as basketball, football, soccer and ice hockey, Trickie admits that for baseball it is especially convenient.

"It's a more simple game than football, for example," Trickie said.

"In baseball you have guys hitting balls and catching them and on a football field there's so many actions going on at once. While I've been using this program for baseball, I've found it really useful."

Simple or not, there are numerous plays during a baseball game that are immediately categorized according to a player's position and starting history, and these stats can be further broken down into an individual's batting or fielding game-by-game summary. Adding to the benefits are its capabilities to generate team summaries and provide a play-by-play narrative at the end of a game.

TAS is equally important for all levels of sports from recreational teams to international organizations and is used at most colleges as well.

"I'm pretty sure that all North Carolina schools use it," Trickie said.

"I know that the conference schools at least have used it for several years. Some might have more advanced programs, but

associate

a top pitching speed with playing power. While some might argue that the display of a speed affects a pitcher's mental approach to the game, others suggest that this is not the main concern on the field.

Keith LeClair, head coach of ECU baseball, feels that overall the radar gun is an effective tool for this sport.

"It shows you a little of the pitcher's arm strength," LeClair said.

"The radar gun usually helps coaches evaluate the pitchers and project their performance in the future. It doesn't fulfill the total criteria, but it's always important for the coaches to consider."

LeClair said there are no negative impacts concerning radar use and the gun usually did not pose any type of threat to the pitcher's opinion of his skill.

"Everyone usually thinks that they throw faster than they really do, but they're more concerned with getting the batter out when they're up to pitch," LeClair said.

"I really don't think the use of the radar gun is so much of a mental thing."

Whatever consequence arises from knowing how fast a pitcher is or is not throwing, the radar gun has dramatically altered the perspectives from which baseball is viewed. Together, the automated scorebook and the radar gun are constantly being revised as baseball, a game of stats, continues to grow through such technological advances.

THE AUTOMATED SCOREBOOK

- All hitting, fielding, pitching and situational stats are automatically calculated.

- Supports baseball or softball, the DH rule, softball tie-breaker rule, 40-player rosters.

- Select the sort order, headings and statistics minimums for your reports.

- Creates report text files for word processing or to transmit/fax.

- Produce HTML files for the internet automatically.

- Utility functions to manage your game files on disk.

- Conference package available to generate NCAA conference leader forms.

- Pitch-charting feature lets you generate pitch-by-pitch reports.

- Media stats display feature to display in-game stats on data display monitors.