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Testing Pitch Recognition to Improve Talent Identification and Player Development

Peter J. Fadde, Ph.D. (Southern Illinois Univ.) & Sean Müller, Ph.D. (Murdoch Univ., Perth AUS) /
Email: fadde@siu.edu / Cell: 765-427-5977

Benefits of Pitch Recognition testing

1. Triangulate with Performance data
2. Predict BB% and "eye" (BB/K ratio)
3. Diagnose PR weaknesses
4. Baseline to compare if batter slumps
5. Determine how well batters "see" an opponent pitcher (MLB level)
6. Assess training and development initiatives (pre/post test)

Video-Occlusion Testing Procedure

- Batters' view of Opponent Pitchers
- Left-Handed and Right-Handed Pitchers (ABL)
- 98 video pitches edited to black (occluded) at Moment-of-Release, MOR+50ms, MOR+125ms
- Test up to 15 players in a 20-minute session
- Normed data base of 200 batters
- Identify Pitch Type; Predict Location (Ball/Strike)

Trial Number	Type of pitch? Ball or Strike?		
	Fastball	Curveball	Changeup
1	B S	B S	B S
2	B S	B S	B S
3	B S	B S	B S
4	B S	B S	B S

Test booklet: Circle Ball (B) or Strike (S)

Level	Pitch Type (FB, Curve, Change)	Pitch Location (Ball/Strike)
MiLB	60	60
Cape Cod	61	63
Midwest League	58	64

Scores on 20-80 point scout scale: 60 is average, over 65 is top 25%; below 55 is bottom 25%. Tested 125 MiLB batters, 35 Cape Cod League batters, 45 college batters, and 15 batters on a Midwest League team.

"A" Batter	Pitch Type	Pitch Location (Ball/Strike)
Robert	58	69
Thomas	64	71
Lorenzo	53	52
Jorge	47	62

Pitch recognition scores of players on a Midwest League team were used by the team's coaches to diagnose batters' strengths and weaknesses, as profiled below.

Player Profile: Robert established a high on-base percentage early in in the season and was quickly promoted. He continued to draw walks but his batting average fell at high-A level – as predicted by low Pitch Type score.

Player Profile: Thomas was drafted in the second round out of college, in part because of his exceptional plate discipline. In his second year of professional baseball, coaches were re-tooling his swing to generate more power. Thomas was hitting below .200 at mid-season, when he received PR testing. His high Pitch Type score and exceptionally Pitch Location score gave coaches confidence that he still had a "good eye" and that if/when he mastered swing adjustments he would regain his potential.

Player Profile: Lorenzo, an international signee, scored in the bottom 25% of PR yet was a productive leadoff hitter. Lorenzo demonstrates that some batters can be successful without high pitch recognition. He has a flat, quick swing and can put many balls in play. Lorenzo shows the need for organizational equivalents to see if batters of his type with low PR skills can play up.

Player Profile: Jorge was a productive, middle of the order hitter and first-half all-star but suffered a severe second-half drop-off. He was promoted to high-A but struggled and returned to low-A. Jorge would be a good candidate for concentrated PR training to match his 5-tool profile.