

Baseball - Prochem makes for a clean game

Prochem Legend and Performer hot water extraction cleaning machines are being used to clean Japan's Chiba Marine Stadium and Domes at Tokyo, Osaka and Fukuoka

Baseball is big in Japan but cleaning dirt-clogged artificial turf at some of its premier baseball venues has been tough until recently. Cleaners have been striking out in the fight against impacted dirt.

Chief culprit in the fight against soiling is clay build-up to infields. Sweepers are used in some stadiums to clean the turf but this only tackles surface dirt and does not remove clay. This is even more of a problem with outdoor venues where the weather conditions harden the clay.

Turf in the domes is cleaned thoroughly once before and once after each baseball season. During the season, the infield is cleaned once or twice as required using two dual-wand truckmounts for two days. It is impossible to get all the dirt out of the pitcher's mound area so cleaners concentrate on removing visible dirt.

Prochem distributor Kazuo Oda of Kowa Inc said: "With the wand lever open, the cleaners use back and forward strokes to loosen the dirt which is then vacuumed. The area is then sprayed while pushing the wand on an upstroke to spray the remaining dirt where it not visible.

"Usually, hot water alone is used to clean the turf, though a neutral pH cleaner is used when a cleaning agent is necessary because of the sensitivity of the backing to alkaline cleaners," he explained.

The outfield takes four days to clean, using four dual-wand truckmounted units on site to accomplish the job. As with the infield, the outfield is cleaned with water, or a neutral pH detergent when needed. Soiling is from red brick dirt which is spread everywhere in the field during the game.

Outdoor artificial turf areas have even more soil and debris than domed stadiums. All artificial turf areas have white boundary lines made from chalk and water or water-based paint and these are removed using a high pressure gun after which a truckmount system cleans the residue.

Said Kazuo Oda: "Japanese cleaning technicians are proving that Prochem equipment set the world standard for hot water extraction equipment."