

# NIU Consolidates Sports Laundry Processing for Huge Timesavings

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Athletic  
Laundry Profile

A team of Sports Laundry Systems<sup>®</sup> (SLS) Washers and Dryers has cut laundry processing time in half at Northern Illinois University (NIU), in Dekalb, Ill. “We’ve always done the same amount of laundry, but now we’re getting it done much more quickly,” said Evan Klepec, assistant athletic director for equipment services.

As of 2019, NIU centralized laundry processing for six athletic areas, including baseball, softball, football and wrestling. Prior to that time, it was handled at two facilities on campus, Huskie Stadium and Yordon Center.

“Five years ago, we needed to replace some really old washers that were continually breaking down,” said Klepec. To determine which models best fit NIU’s needs, he turned to Rory Haiges, of Haiges Machinery Inc., a full-service laundry equipment distributorship, in Huntley, Ill. Haiges has worked with NIU for years.

## Soft-Mount SLS Washer Programmability & High-Speed Extract

Ultimately, NIU installed two 40-pound capacity, softmount SLS Washer-Extractors. “We would have replaced the dryers there too, but the room was odd and new machines would not fit into that location,” said Klepec. Nonetheless, he noticed a huge performance difference in terms of programmability and productivity.

The washers deliver total control over every variable of the wash process. This ensures all items — from loops and towels to warmups and uniforms — are correctly cleaned. Additionally, the new SLS Washers automatically inject the correct detergents and chemicals, which eliminates human error and the possibility of damage to uniforms and fabrics. Operators just enter a program number and press start.

“The programmability is nice,” said Klepec. “We often use the delay-cycle feature so we could load the washer at the end of the work day and set it to begin operation at 5 a.m.”

Moreover, since the installation of the SLS Washers, Klepec maintains NIU completes more laundry per day. “The washers spin out at a high rate, so in turn, laundry takes less time to dry,” he said.

Compared with traditional hardmount washers, which generate up to 200 G-force extract speeds, NIU’s SLS Washers reach extract speeds of up to 354 G-force. In doing so, they remove more moisture from laundry, shorten resulting dry time and improve production.

## Combining Laundry Locations & Adding SLS Dryers

Fast forward to 2019 when the decision was made to consolidate the laundry operation into one facility. The two 40-pound capacity SLS Washers were relocated to a larger area at the Yordon Center, where they joined two existing 55-pound capacity soft-mount washers. During the move, all existing dryers were discarded and replaced with two 75/85- and two 50/60-pound capacity SLS Dryers with automatic reversing and moisture sensing.

Haiges performed the relocation and installation in two days. Since the relocated washers were freestanding softmounts, they were easily moved and reinstalled without bolt-down. “Haiges was fantastic,” said Klepec. “They came in right before Christmas and got all the equipment installed and operational really fast.”

## Haiges Machinery Inc.

“Haiges installed our original machines and have been a great, local supplier for years. They are knowledgeable and quick get help us.”

## Why Choose Sports Laundry Systems?

“We wanted highly programmable, high-speed washers for quickly washing athletic laundry. It used to take a full day to complete softball laundry after the team was on the road. Now, with the SLS equipment it takes 2-4 hours. Our laundry time for football dropped, as well, from 4-6 hours to 2-3.”

## NIU at a Glance

NIU is home to 17 athletic programs and 450 student-athletes.

## SLS Equipment Mix

- (2) 40-pound capacity SLS Softmount Washers
- (2) 50/60-pound capacity SLS Drying Tumblers
- (2) 75/85-pound capacity SLS Drying Tumblers

Today, with everything in one place, the laundry is operating on all cylinders. “It’s cut laundry time in half,” said Klepec. Overall, Klepec said he’s happy with the upgrades and would recommend the SLS brand to colleagues. “It’s a phenomenal product at a good price point. It helps us do a better job than before.”