

Utilizing the VMI and ADI quickly

by Clifton Neeley

In recent articles I identified different pitcher-types with which we can compare effectiveness rates against the ADI and the VMI. These four types can help you quickly decide whether the pitcher is in trouble, or the hitters are in trouble for today's games.

Do a last minute check

If you want a last minute check against buying a pitcher or hitter for today's contest, check our database to see if he is a "Tight," "Reverse," or "Loose" pitcher against a hitter who is in a good or bad VMI range to perform against his pitch-type. At this time we are working to provide you some ways in which to check this aspect more quickly. You should use the "Pitcher Stats by ADI" under the Members menu at baseballvmi.com by selecting the team and pitcher name and querying today's game ADI. Then check the hitter's data in the "Sortable Stats" under "MLB top 50" by querying the team, date range (I suggest using 201 instead of 2017, in order to get additional years' data), select more than "10 at bats," and check his hitting contribution against those pitches in today's team VMI range.

The "Tight Pitcher" (remember, this pitcher throws the Four-Seamer primarily and the Slider and Curve) is better against a Low (+ or -) VMI team, or a Negative VMI team, but will get hit harder in thin air environments (below 60 ADI such as Atlanta, Texas, Kansas City, Arizona and of course Colorado) that typically generate high plus VMIs.

The "Loose Pitcher" (he throws several off-speed pitches, but not many Four-Seamers)-- reviews of the data are mixed, because he is better against a High Plus VMI team in a High ADI, but he is usually worse against the High Negative VMI team and in Low ADI's. But, because the pitches are typically slower--even this is tough to call due to mental focus of the hitting team. An over aggressive team that is pressing will stay off-balance due to the slower speeds; but a team that is relaxed and having fun is likely to pound this pitcher.

The "Reverse Pitcher" (he is a Sinker Ball pitcher, or a higher than normal number of Two-Seamers) - better against the High Plus VMI team, but worse in the Higher Negative VMI team outings. This, of course, is due to the hitter's "Visual Memory" causing him to set up to deal with the upward lifting Four-Seamer, plus being able to identify and change his body position (within a half second) to hit the lesser lifting Two-Seamer and downward breaking Sinker, Slider, Curve, etc.

The "Knuckleball Pitcher" (Obviously he concentrates primarily on the Knuckleball) - he is always a tough pitcher to deal with, but most likely more so in the Welterweight ADI atmospheres where most teams play the largest portion of their schedules. Interestingly, pitchers avoid throwing the Knuckleball in the very heaviest air that we have labeled Heavyweight. Furthermore, the Knuckleballs thrown in the lower 70s ADI haven't been super successful either. Although it would seem that a pitcher could get really good movement on this diving, darting and hopping pitch in the heaviest of air, he may have a little more difficulty controlling the Knuckleball. Since the heaviest of air is also going to be the coldest air at sea level, then one can imagine that the bitter cold would have an effect on the pitcher's grip, feel and comfort. Add to those issues the fact that all his other pitches should be effective in the heaviest air, and the fact that any speed Four-Seamer will be

more difficult to hit at cold sea level locations, and you can see why a Knuckleball pitcher may choose them over the Knuckleball.

We have been tracking pitches in MLB since 2014, and no pitcher has ventured a Knuckleball in Colorado's Featherweight climate, either. It may be that the right team with the right pitcher has not been scheduled to pitch there since we began tracking every pitch, but it may also be that it is too risky to venture, in the minds of managers and pitchers.

Regardless of the reasons, we have no data in the past three years for the Knuckleballer in either the heaviest of the Heavyweight or the Featherweight climates. It remains to be seen how Dickey finishes the year in terms of hit-to-strike percent as a member of the Lightweight climate Atlanta Braves. Obviously, he had a great game recently against the San Francisco Giants when they were a high negative VMI team arriving directly from Coors Field in Denver.

In my next several articles I will outline both physical and mental aspects of each of the VMI Ranges that we have assigned to teams while adjusting to each climate. There are some team tendencies that I have discovered that are very significant to winning, though I had no foreknowledge this would be the case. We can now tell when the starting pitcher will be over-matched by the hitters, under-matched against certain teams or equally matched up between pitchers, hitters and teams. When the Air Density Splits and the VMI splits eventually get added to all the Sabermetrics data that is being maintained by long-time Sabermetrics professionals, then these splits will show the individual hitter's tendencies more clearly against each pitch-type. At that time, we all should be able to match up a hitter against the starting pitcher, as well as to the balance of the bull pen. At this time, the team data is showing clear tendencies, but the individual data is still too voluminous for our individual organization to easily drill down to the individual player for easy access by fantasy baseball participants. Therefore, the team tendencies need to apply to all that team's players--so you will be wise to select your players before attempting to do a final check against the VMI and the ADI. Till next time....

Visual Memory by Clifton Neeley, creator of the Visual Memory Index© and author of the web-site www.baseballvmi.com. Clifton pitched and played baseball and fast-pitch softball in the mountainous southwest Colorado area from 4,000 feet in Grand Junction to 6,000 feet in Durango to 9,000 feet in Telluride prior to his college experience in baseball.