Putting a Microscope on the ADI and the Larger VMI at ±2 to ±8

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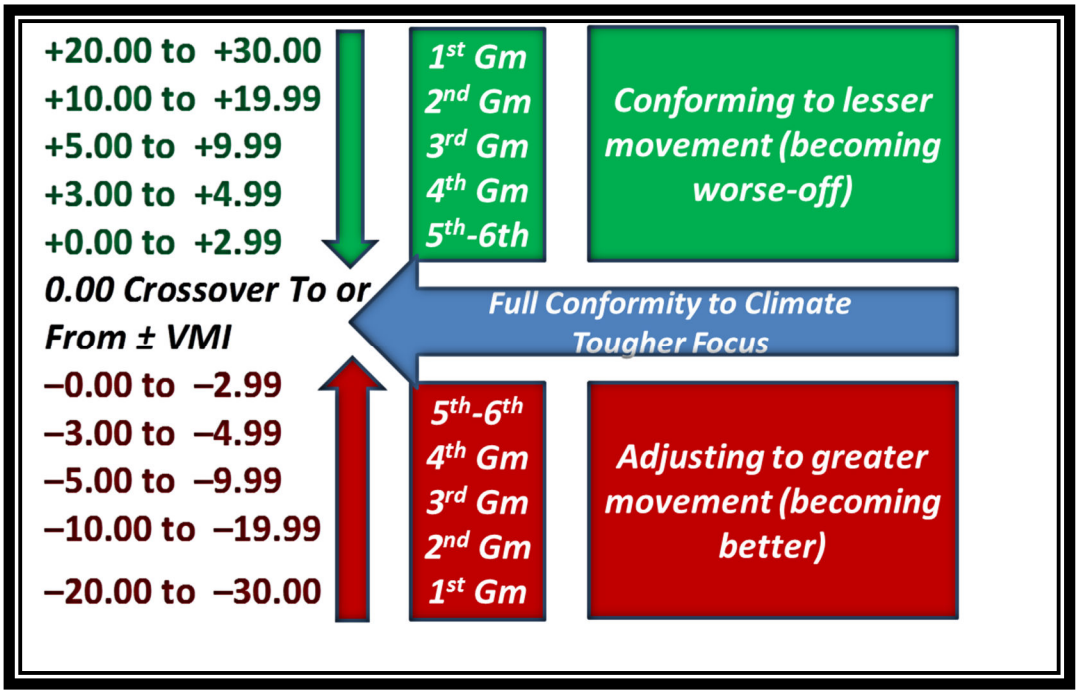
VMI Tracking:

Once again, keep the following graphic in mind as you watch a series between two teams; this (conforming and adjusting) is only a tendency, but appears to remain true over the course of a season, even if April and September do not conform exactly.



The tendency also depends somewhat upon where exactly on the above scale a team begins a road trip. If a team first enters a heavier air environment at only a minus 3.00 it may not throw the hitters off much in terms of pitch movement. On the other hand, if the team enters the first game of a road trip at a minus 9.00 and two games later you see a minus 3.00, then today at minus 3.00 it may be a huge relief to the hitting team. This is especially true when a team has competed against a Tight Pitcher yesterday at say, minus 6.00, and today gets the luxury of seeing a Reverse Pitcher at the example of a minus 3.00.

+2.01 to +4.00—This range is where air density first becomes physically noticeable on the plus side of the scale. The amount of movement is truly less than the hitter is used to seeing, but by an amount that is up to ½ of an inch on the main pitch in baseball. This becomes more significant because the pitcher who throws the Four-Seam fastball as his primary pitch cannot detect his ball movement difference against what the hitter is used to seeing--without a telescope in the form of the VMI. So his tendency is to throw the same pitches he always throws (very carefully) until the hitters show him and his catcher what they can do today. To further complicate this scenario, most pitchers, catchers and

managers take each hitter as an individual, as opposed to looking at the team as performing substantially alike. The VMI is counter intuitive to the baseball professional, because the people who fill those positions have not looked at the team as a whole in past years. Since they may not be watching the VMI yet, you have a good opportunity here. Take a look at the type of pitcher who is starting against your player. If he is a "Tight Pitcher," your player will probably hit his average or greater against him. If he is a "Reverse Pitcher," hitters will struggle with the Two-Seam and the Sinker, but will hit the slower pitches much better. Shortly, we will be able to provide you with a "Detailed Team Match-Up" which will provide you with the pitcher-type and the actual production percentages within those ADI and VMI ranges.

+4.01 to +6.00—This range makes a hitter very dangerous. It is between ½ inch "less" movement and ¾ of an inch less on that primary Four-Seam fastball.

As in the lower ranges, if he is a "Tight Pitcher," your player will probably hit his average or greater against him. If he is a "Reverse Pitcher," hitters will struggle with the Two-Seam and the Sinker and maybe the Slider, but will hit the slower pitches at a greater clip.

+6.01 to +8.00-- This range makes a hitter extremely dangerous. It is between ¾ inch "less" movement and a full inch less.

The pitcher type is extremely important here, just as it is in all the greater movement conditions within transitional baseball in college and MLB. Let's take a look at the minus VMI side of the scale.

-2.01 to -4.00-- If he is a "Tight Pitcher," hitters will focus harder on the Four-Seamer and the Slider, and could actually hit better in the latter part of the game after some good exposure. This condition is very common in MLB and is not considered a unique condition by the players. However, the slower, breaking pitches will probably be dangerous to throw in the early part of the game. If the pitcher is a "Reverse Pitcher," your player will probably hit his average or greater against him on the Two-Seamer and/or the Sinker alone.

-4.01 to -6.00—This is a dangerous condition for the hitter, but if his team has struggled for several days to adjust and is now adjusted upward from a larger disadvantage, then they may be well up to the challenge both mentally and physically.

If the pitcher is a "Reverse Pitcher," your player will probably crush the ball against him. If he is a "Tight Pitcher," hitters will struggle with the Four-Seam and the Slider, but will hit the slower pitches much better.

-6.01 to -8.00--Same comments as above, but just a little more emphasis. We are talking about a condition where the pitches are moving one full inch or more, greater than this team has been recently exposed to. It could have a great effect on the hitters, depending on the type and speed in the pitcher's arsenal. A Reverse Pitcher is probably in big trouble.

This is what I call the Mid Minus VMI Range and the production within it will depend on whether this is the first game in the series or if a team left Coors Field several games ago. If this is the third game away from Coors Field, then this team could be dangerous while approaching "normal baseball" in MLB by adjusting to it from the first two games' exposure.

If it is the first game of a series away from a venue such Texas, which is another "Lightweight Air" venue, it will probably fit the scenario whereby the hitting team is surprised that they are under the fastball and must begin to adjust to the Tight Pitcher.

Our new "Detailed Match-Ups" web page will also show the distinctions I've outlined between pitcher types so that you can become very familiar with what is happening in the mind of the hitter.

You have witnessed the rise and fall of the Colorado Rockies once again this year. Remember, the Rockies lost two games at home before they transitioned to Dodger Stadium where they lost three and then traveled to San Francisco to lose three more. Those two losses at home were after they had dropped below a plus 2.00 VMI. Their opponent, however, sported a High Plus VMI after arriving at Coors Field. Then the Rockies became a High Minus VMI team in Dodger Stadium, and by the time they arrived at AT&T Park they transitioned as a Mid Minus VMI team, getting swept by both teams.

You probably witnessed the Rockies playing terrible overall baseball during that trip. Losing games affects confidence; losing confidence affects decision-making even on defense. Losing good decision-making has a negative effect on the entire team, and the pitchers become tentative at the same time as the hitters become timid in decision making, yet over-aggressive on the pitch at the plate. It is extremely tough to turn that around, especially when the team faces another High Minus VMI road trip.

Next time we'll look at even higher VMI ranges and then, move on to deeper issues with team psychology.

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.