



Big-league ballclubs nurture talent with Lotus Domino.

Application	Automated system for tracking player development data
Business Benefits	Cost savings of 25% in scouting systems administration; 100% improvement in workflow management; eight hours a day saved in injury report transfer time; 50% savings in report distribution time; improved quality of decisions on player development
Software	Lotus® Domino™ Lotus Notes® IBM® DB2® for AS/400® IBM Prospect Reporting and Organizational Solution (PROS)
Hardware	IBM AS/400
Business Partner	Tritech Consulting, Inc.

In the business of Major League baseball, attracting the brightest talent requires big money. Marquee players who can deliver the hits or baffle opponents with wicked curveballs demand competitive contracts. So, how do ballclubs compete when they're vying in the same talent pool with varying budgets? Some teams rely on player development, tapping into Minor League resources for up-and-coming prospects, whom they can bring up at affordable salaries. Others can afford to look at players from both the Minors and the Majors. Either way, it amounts to a need to review a lot of information, from statistics to injury histories to game reports.

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—Jim Edwards, Director of Information Systems, Kansas City Royals



The Kansas City Royals are automating their player development data using Lotus Domino and Lotus Notes—and getting better information at draft time.

It's about business, not just technology.



Following the lead of the New York Mets, the Royals will develop a full-blown scouting application using IBM PROS.

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—Jim Edwards

Baseball is a game of numbers, heavily reliant on statistics and other information. Sharing that information in a timely manner among the key people—trainers, scouts and player developers—can be the tough part. These professionals are constantly on the road. So, a fax with information suggesting that a certain Triple A player might be worth checking out simply may not reach the appropriate scout or player developer in time.

More and more teams are turning to technology to help them sort through critical information. Take the Kansas City Royals, which, at \$30 million, has one of the lowest player payrolls. They rely on player development, but their traditional method of information sharing through handwritten faxed reports and voice mail messages was cumbersome and hit-or-miss at best. To give their scouts, trainers and player developers the timely, accurate information they need to make good decisions about drafts, trades and promotions, they've automated their injury tracking system as well as player profiles and game and series reports.

Jim Edwards, the Royals' director of information systems, and his staff of two leveraged a single AS/400 server, a modest investment in software and help from IBM Business Partner Trittech Consulting, Inc. into a powerful e-business solution. Last year, they piloted their automated injury tracking system, based on Lotus Notes and Domino, which gave player developers, trainers and scouts faster access to the latest performance and injury reports. When the Minor League season opened last spring, they added game reports, series reports and player profiles. And this fall, the Royals are planning to implement a full-blown scouting application using IBM Prospect Reporting and Organizational Solution (PROS).

“Automating our reports with Domino and Notes provides a repository of information so that multiple people involved in trades and player evaluations can get to that information, instead of having 20 to 30 pieces of paper all over their desks,” explains Edwards.

He continues: “Our Domino and Notes system is the perfect solution for the nomadic culture of baseball; we now have better decision-making capabilities at draft time and for free-agent signing. What's also impressive is that we did it all with the AS/400 infrastructure we already had in place, and, from a simple investment in Notes e-mail, we've easily scaled to very complex groupware applications.”

Royals count on e-business to power timely player reports

Indeed, Edwards' project had modest beginnings, driven by a simple, but critical need for timely injury and player performance reports. The Royals' director of player development, Bob Hegman, reviews Minor League injury reports to track players' progress and readiness for promotions. The team's head trainer, Nick Swartz, reviews them to ensure that players are provided appropriate treatments. Trainers previously tracked this data by entering information in a database application, supported by IBM DB2 on the Royals' AS/400 server.

The problem was, if a player was moving to another farm team, his former trainer had to export his injury reports from the database application for the new trainer, who had to import these reports into his tracking program. Sending the information to another trainer required the same cumbersome process.

The Royals needed an e-mail program to facilitate injury report transfers. Edwards found the team's solution in Lotus Notes, which replaced the importing and exporting process with e-mail attachments that could be sent to individuals and groups. Injury reports are still entered in the same database application, but Edwards indicates he will eventually switch to a Lotus Notes application for entering player injury information. This Lotus Notes transferring system has saved the Royals at least one hour per day for each of the team's eight trainers, enabling them, along with the player developers, to focus more time on helping the players hone their skills.

With the injury tracking function in place, the information technology (IT) staff soon incorporated functions for game reports, player profiles and series reports. Game reports had been previously handwritten and faxed between the farm teams and the home office. Using Lotus Notes, Minor League player developers enter game statistics into a Lotus Notes form and press a "send" button to place the document on the Lotus Notes database—which is accessible to scouts, Major League trainers and other key personnel. Series reports and player profiles are distributed in a similar manner.

Not only is report distribution 50 percent faster, but information sharing within the Royals organization is more efficient. "The trainer simply dials up the host to get his e-mail, but he doesn't realize that these databases—such as game reports—are being synchronized," Edwards says. "When the trainer clicks on the appropriate icon, he's got the latest game reports from the other teams. And we've had nearly flawless execution of these replication sessions." Edwards points out that these solutions are also beneficial because they are relatively simple for users who might be more savvy about strike-outs and rotator-cuff injuries than about technology.

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—Carmen Fusco, Director of Professional Scouting, New York Mets



The New York Mets use IBM PROS to track the latest information on players and player transactions.

Mets find complete solution in IBM PROS

Technology-savvy or not, baseball scouts know a useful tool when they use one. After the Royals' scouts saw the Lotus Notes application, they wanted to use it to enter and access scouting reports from the baseball field—reports that had also been handwritten. Consequently, Edwards looked into developing a full-blown scouting application in-house. But, with a limited staff and tight budget, that would have taken 12 to 18 months—missing an entire draft year.

Fortunately, Edwards' search led him to the New York Mets and to IBM PROS. Based on Domino and Lotus Notes, PROS is a complete solution for collecting, storing and accessing information about players and prospective players. Having used PROS for a year now to track and assess up-to-date player and player transaction information, the Mets praise the application for improving amateur and professional scouting, facilitating draft selections and enabling field personnel to focus on finding talent, not entering information. "Without a doubt, PROS has improved our decision-making," says Carmen Fusco, director of professional scouting for the Mets. "PROS really does allow us an edge throughout the season and during the draft."

Russ Richardson, the Mets' director of data processing, notes that, since PROS has replaced paper forms, the team is enjoying a 25 percent cost saving in scouting system administration and a 100 percent improvement in workflow management. "Our field personnel find the system incredibly easy to use," says Richardson. "They rave about how it has helped them do their work."

What was also attractive about PROS for the Mets was the fact that it took advantage of their current infrastructure with the AS/400 platform and required limited support from their five-person IT staff. "We needed the dependability of the IBM Worldwide Sports Solutions group to design and build our application quickly and effectively," notes Richardson. In fact, PROS was developed for the Mets in less than five weeks, just in time for a key January scouting meeting.

For the Royals, PROS integrates with existing databases, such as player and game statistics, and will also run on their existing AS/400 server (recently upgraded to Model 170). "We reviewed a couple of other options, including a Microsoft® product that was deemed too costly and another package that would have required programming changes for customization. PROS, on the other hand, takes advantage of Domino and Notes to provide flexibility in reporting as well as changeable views, without the need to reprogram," Edwards says.

In baseball, one measure of fiscal success can be found in the size of the crowds. A ballclub needs to draw a certain number of fans each season to be financially healthy. What helps fill the stands? The players. Both the Kansas City Royals and the New York Mets are examples of teams that are using technological tools to enable their scouts, trainers and player developers to make better personnel decisions. Says Edwards, "Our IBM e-business solution is proving to be a valuable player on our team."

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Internet Division
Route 100
Somers, New York 10589

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