

## Bloomberg Sports Continues to Push the Envelope of the Baseball Analytics Engine

Written by Maury Brown  
Friday, 17 December 2010 14:36

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At the 2009 Winter Meetings in Indianapolis, Bloomberg, the powerhouse known for financial analytics with the strong ability to visually display it, set about doing what small shops and database geeks had not: cornering the baseball analytics market.

With a strong background in dealing with financial institutions, news reporting that had branched from pure business into other areas such as sports, their pure muscle was something that was bound to be noticed. Bloomberg hitched their wagon to MLB Advanced Media's data, and went about seeing if they could not only get all of the 30 clubs in MLB to purchase a "pro" version, they married up with MLB.com to go about using the analytics engine in a pared down capacity for fantasy baseball.

When attending the initial demonstration and continued use of the consumer piece for fantasy baseball, two things seemed clear: Bloomberg's ability to visually display data is nothing short of stunning. But, for super users – those that might look to do intense analytics work only or within a group, it was still in need of some tending.

The consumer might not see the need nor care for the intense side. After all, Bloomberg had purposely designed the tool to make it easy for those that didn't want to labor over stats to quickly and easily draft and maintain their fantasy team.

But, it's hard not to see consumer piece to the Bloomberg Sports analytics engine as a Ferrari that lives in downtown traffic. It looks great, but you know that there's so much power that's

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stuck under the hood that's being wasted while stuck in first gear.

Flash-forward to this year's Winter Meetings in Orlando, and Bloomberg had clearly been listening to clubs and super-users.

Demonstrations of how the pro tool being shopped to clubs could be leveraged, had former Brewers, Mets, and A's pitching coach Rick Peterson there as a consultant. As the images below show, Peterson used the tool to analyze Brewers pitcher [John Axford](#).

As the May snapshot shows, Axford had been struggling with his location. According to Peterson, Axford's foot plant had been too far to the right, thus placing his release point outside of the window within the strike zone. By adjusting his foot to the left, Axford's release point moved within a range that allowed him to adjust where the ball was coming into the strike zone, as detailed in the second image.

The key to the left shows the following:

### PITCH TYPE

- FA - fastball
- FC - cutter
- FS - splitter
- SL - slider
- CU - curveball
- CH - changeup
- KN - knuckleball
- O - miscellaneous

### PITCH RESULT

- BL - ball
- CS - called strike

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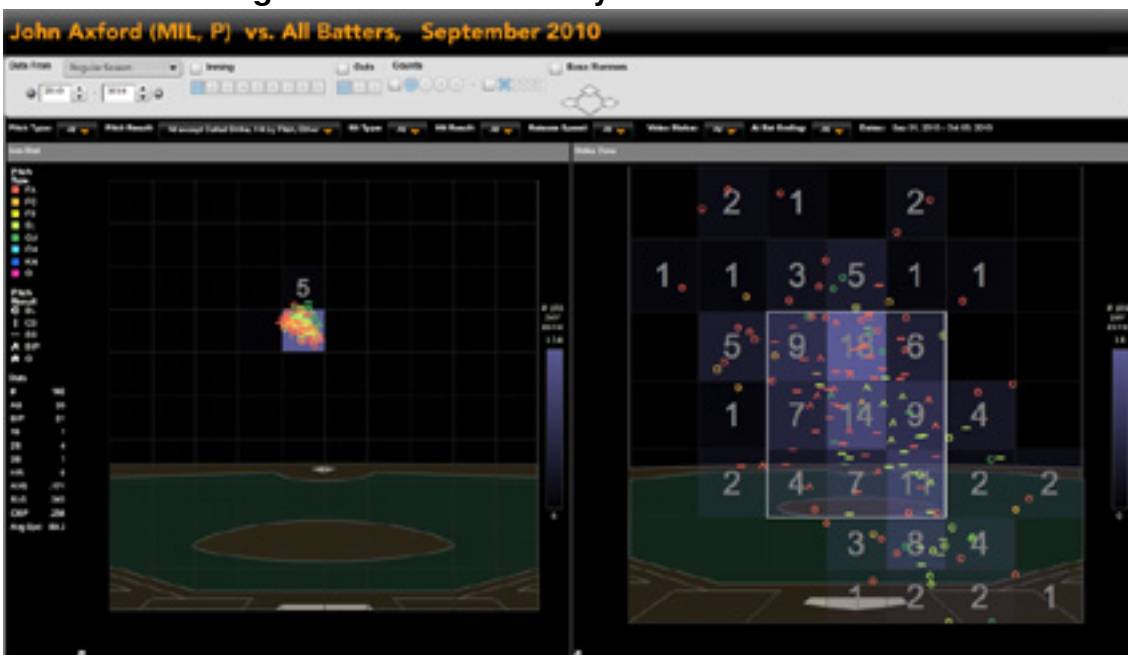
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- SS - swinging strike
- BIP - ball in play
- O - other



Select to see in larger view. Axford in May



Select to see in larger view. Axford in Sept.

Bloomberg also heard comments made about the initial offering not only from clubs but from the media about the need to make the data more portable. Analytics teams within club organizations or those that needed to bring data in printed format out into the field were unable

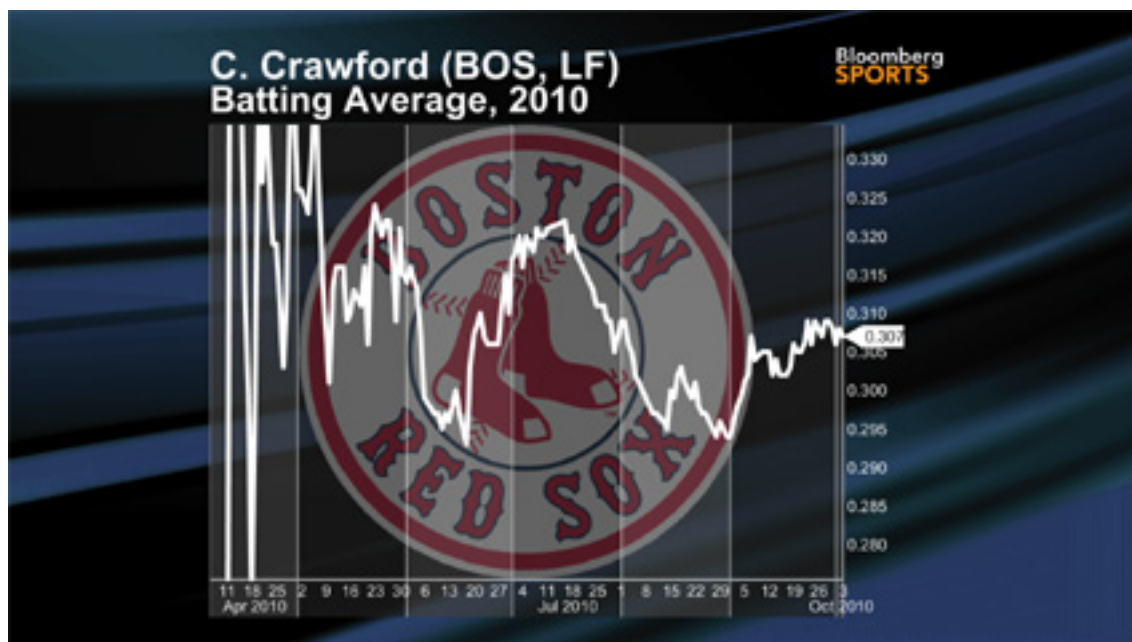


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**Example of the broadcast graphic generated**

Along those lines, discussions at the Winter Meetings with Bloomberg found that they are toying with a version that would allow a fully-functional graph to be embedded as an iframe in websites, much like YouTube video can now be done.

Bloomberg Sports also said they will expand mobile offerings with draft and in-season tools available on iPhone, iPad and Android.

All-in-all, Bloomberg is making great strides on the engine. Those on the analytics side of clubs may choose to use other tools, but the ability to display information graphically is a powerful way to get a point across, and therefore, as the tool continues to mature, expect to see Bloomberg Sports becoming more and more prominent online, on television, and within the front office.

Here's what else Bloomberg offered

### **Consumer Product Upgrades and New Features for 2011**

- A "Player Recommendations" tool that integrates with your fantasy league provider suggesting free agents that you should pick up to optimize your team's performance
- New to the "Draft Kit" are fantasy factors which analyze the "intangibles" in a structured

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way, such as durability, park factors, and luck. The new Draft Kit will also suggest when you should draft a player or how much you should bid for him in auction leagues

- Custom "B-Rank" calculation will now be tailored to your league settings offering you an even more accurate ranking system than last year
- A "Trade Analyzer" evaluates single or multi-player trades based on your fantasy leagues scoring system to determine the value of a proposed trade
- Front Office 2011 will have a simplified interface with an improved visual style and clear navigation capability to provide easy access to useful data

### Professional Product Upgrades and New Features for 2011

- A "Scouting Analysis" system that manages scouts' reports for review by the club's player development staff
- Integration of Video to our Pitches and Pitch Patterns functions allows for quick visual confirmation/reference of pitching-related analysis
- Player Alerts delivers statistics for a list of players in a timely post-game fashion to the user's e-mail
- "Similarity Scoring" provides a dynamic list of 'like' players based on a customizable list of statistics
- Exporting of stat and pitch distribution charts to TV-friendly graphic files for use during game broadcast



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He looks forward to your comments via email and can be

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