

How Baseballs Are Made



Characters: Taylor the Baseball Maker

Caller

Hello. Big Hitter Baseball Factory. This is Taylor.

Hello, Taylor. I would like to know what is inside my baseball.

I can help you with that. I'll tell you how they are made.

Great!

First we start with a tiny ball made out of cork and rubber called a pill.

How big is the pill?

It's about the size of a cherry.

What do you do next?

Next we cover the pill with two layers of rubber.

How big is the ball then?

It's a little more than four inches around.

That's not very big. What is the next step?

We start winding it tightly in strands of woolen yarn.

Yarn? Isn't that the stuff in sweaters?

That's right. First we wind it in gray yarn.

How much gray yarn?

We keep winding and winding until the ball is almost eight inches around.

That's a lot of yarn!

Yes it is, but we're not done adding yarn just yet.

You're not?

No. Next we add almost an inch of white woolen yarn, then another layer of the gray woolen yarn. Finally, we wrap it with a layer of white cotton yarn.

Why do you use woolen yarn in the first three layers and then switch to cotton yarn for the last one?

All of those layers of woolen yarn help the baseball keep its round shape, even after it has been hit many times. The cotton yarn is really strong, and it helps keep the ball from tearing.

But why are some layers of yarn gray and some white?

I guess it's a good way to tell where one layer of yarn ends and the other begins.

Do you cover the cotton too?

Yes. We cover that with white leather that has been cut in two figure-eight pieces and stitched together with waxed red thread.

Are you done then?

Just about. Next we have to inspect the ball to make sure it looks all right. Then we measure and weigh the ball so that we are sure it's exactly right. Finally we have to test it.

How do you test it?

We shoot it from an air cannon into a wall from about eight feet away.

I would love to have that job!

Any questions?

Yes. Why are baseballs always white and the stitches always red?

Because those are the rules for official baseballs in the big leagues.

Thank you so much, Taylor, for telling me how baseballs are made.

You are welcome. Goodbye.

Goodbye.