Adidas micoach Smart ball – frequently asked questions

When did you first start thinking about it?

We started working on the miCoach SMART BALL in 2009 about 5 years ago.

**Where did the idea come from?**

Football is the most popular sport in the world and our group is focused on making sports digital.  We put sensors in a football to really explore what was possible.  Through that exploration we realized that we could coach anyone that wanted to learn how to be a better kicker.

**What was the inspiration?**

Every young kid dreams of being the player that makes the free kick in the clutch situation to win the game.  We wanted to create a system that would enable that dream to become a reality.

**Are there plans to produce and develop more? Is there a second generation product in the pipeline**

We are already working on improvements and new experiences for the miCoach SMART BALL that will be rolling out over the next couple of months through updates that will be downloadable for the app and the ball.

**How was the product tested?**

The miCoach SMART BALL has been tested across a range of players from beginners to elite to create an experience that satisfies both sets of needs.  The miCoach SMART BALL has been put through the same durability testing as our World Cup balls to ensure that it will not have any issues over the life of the product.  Robot legs and high speed cameras were also used to fine tune our algorithms throughout the development of the product.

**Will using the app impact heavily on my phone battery?**

The app uses Bluetooth Low Energy to talk to the ball so there will be virtually no impact on the battery life of the phone.

**Is this the most technologically advanced football in the world?**

The miCoach SMART BALL is the most technologically advanced football in the world and the only one that knows how to make anyone a better kicker while having fun at the same time.

**Is there any use in this product for goalkeepers?**

The graphics on the ball and in the app help to teach players how to recognize different spins and spin axes and the resulting flight behaviors of those conditions.  This type of knowledge makes any goalkeeper better.

**Is it used by professional players/clubs?**

The miCoach SMART BALL has been designed and tested for and with players of every level.  Currently it is not being used by any professional clubs but we did not want to position it as an elite training tool.

**What impact do you think the SMART BALL will have on football?**

The SMART BALL will raise the level of play more quickly for players that use it and begin to understand the techniques of great kicking.

**What has the reaction been from players who have used it?**

Our testers don’t want to give them back when the testing is complete and our long term testers are always asking if a friend of theirs can get a ball as well.  Some of our more elite players are saying that this type of product is helping them become better kickers and will definitely help young players improve more quickly.

**How does it work?**

The SMART BALL has been developed to be tough and clever. Able to survive high impact collisions it can still tell you everything you need to know about your kick. The ball is fitted with sensors which can analyse the flight pattern of the ball, the speed, spin, bend, trajectory and foot to ball contact location. The MiCoach SMART BALL comes with a dedicated app, which it communicates with wirelessly using Bluetooth 4.0 low energy. The exterior has been designed to assist with where to kick the ball to generate the desired results and to make it easier for the player to see the type of spin that is on the ball while it is in the air.

This is supported with an app where people can choose to focus on creating more power, how to bend the ball, how to kick a low spin knuckle ball or even take on pro challenges, where users are tasked with mimicking kicks from professionals. The data can all be saved to help you track your progress over time, as well as letting you share the information with your friends on Twitter and Facebook.

**What is inside the ball?**

There is a sensor package suspended in the center of the ball that analyzes the flight characteristics while the ball is in the air.  These measurements and proprietary algorithms are then used to determine the speed, bend, foot/ball impact location, and trajectory of the kick. The ball sends all information via Bluetooth to the miCoach SMART BALL app on your iPhone, where it can predict and visualise the complete path of the ball, even if you kick it against a wall.

**Who is the product aimed at?**

The adidas miCoach SMART BALL is a personal training tool. What we wanted was to develop a product to give everybody the chance to become the best kicker on the team. It allows players to improve flair, skill, power and control.”

**Does it react like a ‘regular football’?**

The miCoach SMART BALL has been developed to the same level of standards as our highest end balls.  It was important that it feel and behave like a regular football.  We have had players use two balls, one with the system and one without and they were not able to tell the difference.

**Can I use the SMART BALL like a regular football?**

The SMART BALL has been designed to perform and behave like a regular football, so it can be used just like a regular ball.  If you want to use it to practice your kicking then it needs to be connected to an iPhone and your kicks have to travel 10 meters in the air.

**What is the ambition for the product?**

The SMART BALL reflects the innovation and cutting-edge technology at our disposal at adidas – not just for this product but for our business as a whole. It demonstrates that we are pushing ourselves to deliver the best product we can to help people be the best they can.  Who knows what will happen with the ever combining worlds of sport and technology, but what is for certain is that adidas will be at the forefront of it.

**Where can I get it?**

adidas SMART BALL is available exclusively for $/€ 299.00 at Apple retail stores in the U.S, and Europe, the Apple Online Store ([www.apple.com](http://www.apple.com/)) and at [adidas.com](http://adidas.com/). The miCoach SMART BALL app is available for free from the App Store on iPhone and iPod touch.

Does it need to hit a solid wall? Will it work with a regular goal?

The SMART BALL just needs to fly 10 meters in the air for it to analyze the kick.  It can be kicked into a wall, a net, or to a friend on the other end of the field.  It does not need an impact with a wall or any other object to work.

**How long does the battery last?**

Once fully charged, the batteryof the SMART BALL will last seven days whether it is being kicked or not being used. The nature of the product means that it is ‘always on’ so we would recommend charging when not in use.

**€/$299 is expensive for a ball – do you realistically expect people to pay this?**

We understand that, like for like when compared with a regular football that SMART BALL would appear expensive. However, the SMART BALL is much more than a regular football. The price is reflective of the technology in the product and the data which it can supply for people seriously looking to improve their game.

**If I’m repeatedly kicking this at a wall, is there a chance it the technology will get damaged?**

Because of the technology in the ball, the product has been tested to the same standards as the World Cup ball, brazuca. This includes having it kicked at 70mph against a wall by a robotic leg over 3,500 times in order to ensure the product is fit for purpose.

**Why isn’t this widely used by clubs?**

The adidas SMART BALL can be used by anybody. However, it has been designed for consumers and for football fans to use as a training tool. Ultimately, it is for anybody involved in football at any level that wants to improve their game.

**Do amateur players really need that much data about their game?**

Technology is inherent in everything we do and football is no different. Ultimately, people want to see results and improvement whether it’s a faster time on a run or a more accurate ability to kick a ball. Before SMART BALL, people would kick the ball and say it felt faster, but didn't know for sure; now they do. It's about giving feedback you would never otherwise get and that's important when it comes to monitoring and measuring results.

Kicking has always been an art that has been mastered by a few.  The SMART BALL breaks down the mysteries of kicking into simple metrics and helps a user improve more quickly by understanding what they are supposed to do and how they are doing.  The objective of the SMART BALL is not to just track data but to actively help a player improve.