

LIFE'S SIMPLE JOYS

Matthew Guest and Ian Littlepage, Team, Inc., explore how to redefine isolation with fewer steps, lower risk, and greater reliability for pipeline operators.

Pipeline operators live in a world defined by paradox. They are asked to extend the life of ageing infrastructure while simultaneously adopting innovations to prepare for tomorrow's energy landscape. They must protect people and the environment while keeping throughput high and downtime minimal. And at the centre of this balancing act lies one of the most deceptively simple yet operationally vital tasks: isolation.

For decades, double block and bleed (DBB) has been a necessary but complex process. Operators have been conditioned to expect multiple hot taps, reinforcement sleeves, and precise spacing requirements, all of which add cost, time, and risk. The work got done, but not without friction.

What if DBB didn't have to be complicated? What if the safest way forward was also the simplest?

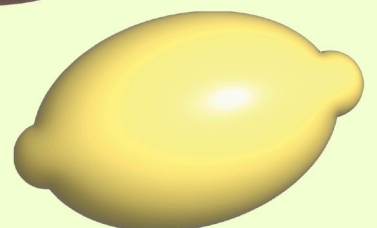
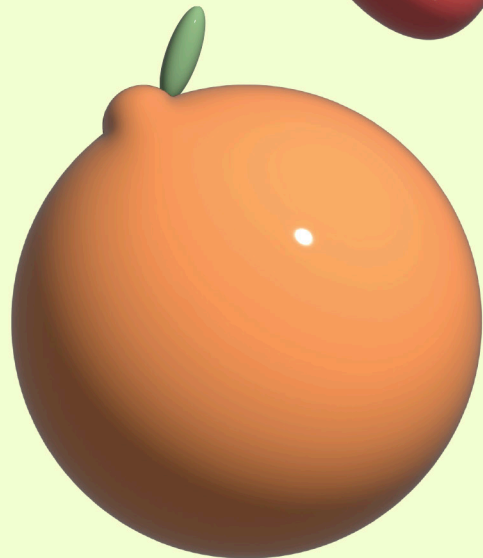
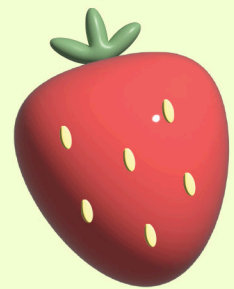
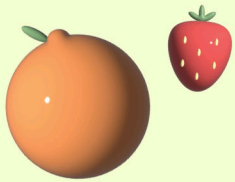
Enter Team's SmartStop® system, a reimagined approach to line intervention that has the potential to shift the way our industry thinks about pipeline integrity.

Why isolation still keeps executives awake at night

Let's be candid. Isolation is a headache.

- ▶ For executives, it represents cost, downtime, and liability exposure.
- ▶ For engineers, it requires juggling technical standards, reinforcement requirements, and safety protocols.
- ▶ For field crews, it means exposure to risk while verifying that seals hold as planned.

Traditional DBB asks a lot from everyone involved. It demands precision and patience in environments where both are in short supply. It is no surprise that many executives view



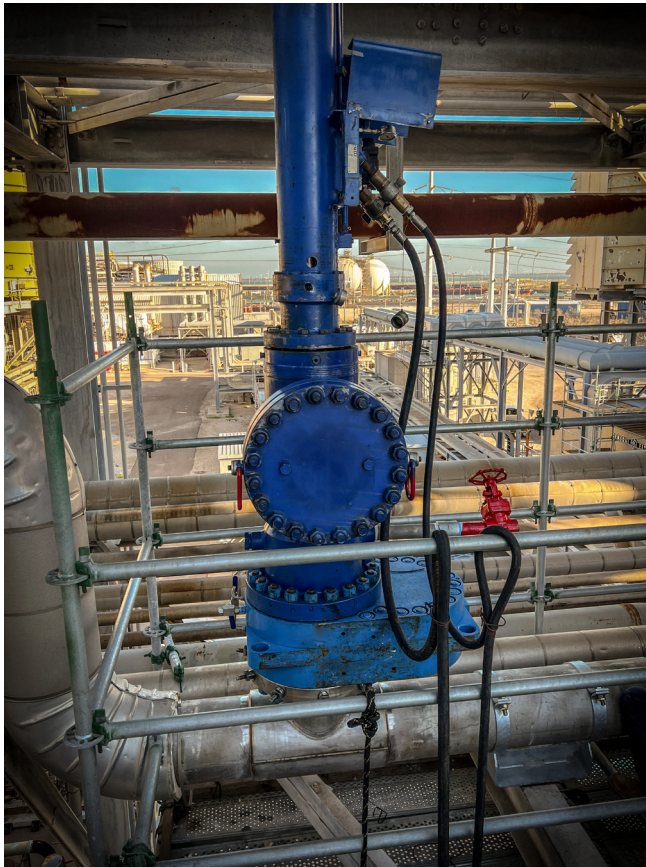


Figure 1. SmartStop set on stainless steel.



Figure 2. SmartStop deployed through a spherical fitting.

isolation as one of the most unpredictable line items in their maintenance budgets.

And yet, without it, no tie-in, retrofit, or repair can move forward. That makes DBB one of the most critical and one of the most ripe for disruption processes in the entire pipeline ecosystem.

Innovation rooted in simplicity

Team's SmartStop is not just a tool; it is a philosophy. It challenges the industry's assumption that 'more fittings' and 'more steps' equal 'more safety'. Instead, it achieves double block and bleed isolation through a single standard fitting which dramatically reduces the complexity operators have long accepted as the cost of doing business.

Key features include:

- One fitting, two barriers: a single fitting deploys primary and secondary seals, eliminating the need for multiple welds and hot taps.
- Integrated bleed port: operators can monitor and vent the space between seals in real time, proving zero energy without secondary interventions.
- Under-flow capability: thanks to a rigid rail system, SmartStop can be deployed even under significant flow
- Self-energised seals: seals engage automatically, not through external hydraulics or pressure differentials. Fewer moving parts mean fewer potential failures.
- Robust ratings: fully rated to ANSI 900# and tested up to 2220 psig, with NACE MR0175 compliance, SmartStop is built to handle the toughest conditions.

It strips complexity away. Reliability is achieved by reducing the degrees of freedom: fewer parts, fewer steps, fewer uncertainties.

Why this matters for pipeline leaders

For executives weighing the future of their integrity programmes, SmartStop offers more than a technical upgrade. It is a strategic asset.

- Reduced downtime means higher throughput and lower costs.
- Built-in monitoring reduces liability and reassures regulators.
- Simplified process reduces labour demands on already stretched crews.
- Safer field execution protects both people and brand reputation.

In other words, it is not just solving a technical problem. It is solving a business problem.

Lessons from the field

Operators who have deployed SmartStop often remark on the psychological shift it creates in the field.

Traditionally, verifying seal integrity was one of the most stressful moments of an intervention. Crews would stand exposed, conducting extra taps just to prove zero energy. Each tap meant more cutting, more welding, more risk.

With this system, that stress disappears. The integrated bleed port and zero-energy monitoring provide immediate,

continuous confirmation. Crews can focus on the job at hand rather than the anxiety of whether the isolation will hold.

Executives, too, notice the difference. Projects run smoother, schedules hold tighter, and risk registers shrink. It has the potential to change the cultural relationship between operators and isolation, from dread to confidence.

The bigger picture: integrity in an era of scrutiny

Our industry is operating under a microscope. Regulators are tightening requirements. Investors are asking tougher questions

about ESG. Communities are more vocal about safety and environmental risk.

Against this backdrop, innovations like SmartStop do more than improve operations; they strengthen trust. An operator who can demonstrate that they are adopting forward-thinking, safety-first solutions is not just reducing downtime. They are showing regulators, investors, and the public that they are serious about doing the right thing.

That kind of credibility is priceless in today's operating environment.



Figure 3. SmartStop providing isolation for a new tie-in.

A bridge to the future

Pipeline infrastructure is aging, but demand is not slowing down. That puts tremendous pressure on maintenance strategies. Operators need solutions that can help them safely extend the life of their assets while also preparing for whatever the future of energy holds: hydrogen, carbon capture, or fuels yet to come.

SmartStop is built for that future. Its adaptability across a range of diameters (currently 4 - 24 in., with larger sizes in production) and applications makes it a long-term investment in resilience. Its ability to re-enter existing fittings ensures that today's work lays the foundation for tomorrow's needs.

This is not just about solving today's isolation problem, it is about future-proofing your pipeline programme.

Why executives should pay attention

Thought leadership in pipeline integrity is no longer just about keeping up with regulations. It is about staying ahead of them. It is about running leaner, safer operations that protect people, the planet, and the bottom line.

SmartStop represents forward-thinking innovation. It is a solution born from decades of field experience, engineered with relentless focus on reliability, and designed to meet the realities of 21st century operations.

For executives making decisions about where to invest in integrity management, the message is clear: the future of isolation is not complicated. It is smart.

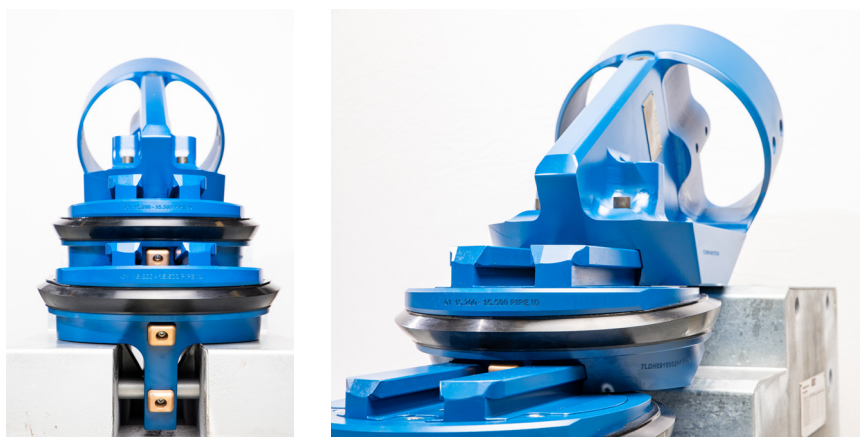


Figure 4. SmartStop: the evolution of double block and bleed.

Conclusion: redefining isolation as we know it

There is a saying in engineering: simplicity is the ultimate sophistication.

For too long, the industry has tolerated unnecessary complexity in one of its most vital processes. Team's SmartStop shows us another path, one where safety, reliability, and efficiency are designed in, not bolted on.

In doing so, it does not just change how we isolate pipelines. It changes how we think about pipeline integrity altogether.

The future of isolation has arrived. And it is simpler, safer, and smarter than we ever thought possible. 