

## **MLS Chicago Fire's Toyota Park** <sup>[1]</sup>

Bridgeview, IL  
United States

In the Chicago suburb of Bridgeview, just a stone's throw from Midway Airport, lies America's fourth soccer-specific professional sports stadium (joining the existing trio of facilities in Columbus, Los Angeles, and Dallas). The new home of Major League Soccer's Chicago Fire, Toyota Park offers fans a much more intimate, up-close way to view the sport than the team's previous home in the cavernous Soldier Field.



Work commenced on Toyota Park in the fall of 2004, with the project being entirely publicly funded (by the Village of Bridgeview). The earth moving and grading, and then the construction of the stadium seating area, took about a year, which meant turf manager Abby McNeal and her staff would not be able to commence with the installation of the irrigation system until November 2005.

The length of time is not anything out of the ordinary, but it did mean that the installation would be performed just at the first blasts of winter would be arriving in America's heartland. And anyone who keeps an eye out on the national news has to be aware that there is no such thing as a "mild" winter in the Chicago area.

Sports Construction Group (Cleveland, Ohio) handled the installation, diligently completing the task before having to deal with frozen ground and single-digit temperatures. Field designer Dan Almond of Millennium Turf Technologies specified all irrigation products—a total of (28) I-40-ON opposing nozzle rotors and (22) I-40 rotors with adjustable arc nozzles. Eight heavy-duty ICV valves supply the water and an 8-station ICC controller operates the entire system.



In addition to the playing field that sits in the middle of the 21,000-seat stadium, there is also an identical field that lies adjacent to the facility and is used for practice. The practice field is exactly the same dimensions and features exactly the same irrigation system as the main field. So, in all, the entire soccer complex actually includes (100) I-40 rotors, (16) ICV valves, and a pair of ICC controllers.

Toyota Park was ready for the start of the Fire's season this past June and has been getting rave reviews from fans and players alike. The league showcased the stadium when it served as host to the 2006 MLS All-Star Game in August.



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