



OAKVILLE SOCCER CLUB CLUB & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Oakville Soccer Club



BACKGROUND

With almost 12,000 players registered to play each year, the Oakville Soccer Club is by far the largest soccer club in Canada. With a population that has just passed the 150,000 mark, Oakville has an amazing soccer tradition with several players on the National Teams, particularly on the female side.

“In Oakville, 1 out of 3 kids between the ages of 5 and 18 play soccer through our programs”, explains Jean C. Gandubert, the Chief Administrative Officer of the Club. “This growth also brings a lot of growing pains such as a huge shortage of fields. The lack of fields is our greatest challenge and the reason why 800 kids were on a waiting list this year. We currently have access to just over 80 fields but we would need about 150. This is why artificial surfaces will become an important part of the solution for the future.”

PROJECT

Oakville has just completed the installation of a FIFA RECOMMENDED 1 STAR Football Turf at River Oaks Park that will be mainly used for youth training and the Adult House League. The Oakville Soccer Club had completed a feasibility assessment and business plan, conducted by Deloitte Touche, to review different options and the case for artificial turf was so obvious that the Club changed its facility development strategy accordingly.

“The Club has always been a reference and a model for both the Ontario Soccer Association and the Canadian Soccer Association, and with the due diligence

process to tackle the problem of facilities, we also establish a stronger relationship with the different levels of government, starting with the municipality.” added Gandubert. “Our business case included such elements as the cost of land (real estate in Oakville is one of the most expensive in the Greater Toronto Area), the cost of maintenance, the cost of replacement as well as assessing our ability to extend the usage times on each field and protect our other premium field from wear and tear”.

A number of artificial turf fields will be added to Oakville’s inventory with a projected small stadium using a FIFA RECOMMENDED 2 STAR Football Turf early in 2008, and 4 to 8 additional FIFA RECOMMENDED 1 STAR Football Turf fields by 2010. To make this possible, the Oakville Soccer Club has entered into a P3 (Public Private Partnership) agreement with the municipality to support and accelerate these investments. The club will contribute to the capital financing, set the technical specifications (based on FIFA guidelines) and take over the operation of the fields, as well as obtaining the new revenue streams granted by the municipality, advertising, naming rights and web-casting. Operating surpluses will be reinvested in the enhancement of existing facilities or for the construction of new facilities through a trust fund / foundation.

“Cost is an issue as we are accountable for our membership, but we seek the best value and quality surfaces that will make the most sense in the long term for us” commented Gandubert. “Our mission is to be a community soccer club providing a life long quality soccer experience that is valued by the players and families in

Oakville. In this context, creating added value and ensuring sustainability is the key for us. Developing facilities such as the FIFA RECOMMENDED 1 STAR Football Turf has meant that the club can continually grow, as the durability and quality of the surface is excellent. Consequently more children and adults are always joining and we can also expand our other programs geared towards skill development”.

OUTLOOK

With the challenges of the Canadian weather, the football season in Ontario is played in the summer, yet the natural grass field is only available from early May to the end of September. Artificial fields will now extend the season and can actually be used year-round. The number of playing hours will quadruple throughout the year and double during the football season making FIFA RECOMMENDED Football Turf fields the most logical choice for the Oakville Soccer Club.

