



SOFI STADIUM LIGHTS UP LOS ANGELES

SoFi Stadium is the multi-purpose \$5 billion, 70,000-seat sports and entertainment venue that anchors the Hollywood Park complex. Feature writer Steve Traiman gets insight from owner, architect & key vendor.

It was an eerily empty 70,000-seat **SoFi Stadium** when the **Los Angeles Rams** beat the **Dallas Cowboys** 20-17 in the first regular-season **NFL** game on September 13.

The **LA Chargers** downed the Bengals 16-13 in Cincinnati but lost their home SoFi opener 23-20 on September 20 in overtime to the Super Bowl champion **Kansas City Chiefs**.

The shared stadium will be similar to the long-standing arrangement for the **New York Giants** and **NY Jets** at their **Meadowlands Stadium** in New Jersey.

A virtual ribbon-cutting ceremony was held September 8, not only to kick off the new showplace, but also to

celebrate the work of the thousands of people that have been part of the development from ground-breaking in November 2016.

At the ceremony, Rams owner/chairman Stan Kroenke said: *"We are in the team business, and you can't get to a moment like today without a great team,"*

As the driving force for the project, he added: *"I would like to thank the 17,000 people who have worked on this project over the past four years. During a period of unrest and change in many parts of the country, it's been our deepest privilege to work on a project this special with such a diverse workforce. Thank you for making our vision a reality."*

SoFi Stadium and Hollywood Park Managing Director Jason Gannon told *PS&AM*: *"Los Angeles Rams Owner/Chairman E. Stanley Kroenke had a vision to create a global sports and entertainment destination in Los Angeles. SoFi Stadium is the centerpiece of that vision – Hollywood Park, a 298-acre mixed-use development – and home to both the NFL teams, the Los Angeles Chargers and the Los Angeles Rams."*

In May, NFL owners voted unanimously to provide Kroenke with an additional \$500 million in financing to help complete the stadium. The budget reportedly has risen from an initially projected \$2.2 billion to over \$5 billion.



Lake Park view toward stadium
All images courtesy of SoFi Stadium

Under the original sharing deal, the Chargers are liable for a nominal \$1 in annual rent, while bringing their 10 home games per season to the venue, a \$200m league loan, plus revenue from seat-licence sales.

Kroenke has borne responsibility for construction costs, but the Rams will receive all revenue generated by the stadium site, barring Chargers gameday revenue and the franchise's share of sponsorship and suite sales.

Gannon continued: *"The guiding principle was to create an unmatched fan experience. Our 70,000ft² 360-degree, centre-hung Samsung videoboard is one of our most captivating features. It is the focal point of the 3.1 million*

ft² stadium, the first of its kind, and the largest digital display in sports. Because the videoboard is visible from virtually every level of the stadium, every seat will have excellent sightlines to the field of play. The videoboard will deliver incredible 4k programming, and it features the largest graphics control system in sports."

After a competitive process in putting the project team together, the Turner and AECOM/Hunt joint venture was named general contractor to oversee construction. Architect **HKS'** relationship goes back to 2014 when the Rams were still in St. Louis, and when the team relocated to Los Angeles in 2016, along with the Chargers who came back in

2017. The Rams re-engaged with HKS for the new stadium.

STADIUM PARTNERS

Digital personal finance company **SoFi** acquired naming rights to the venue in 2019, and will have a 37,000ft² branded VIP activation space inside the stadium, including a dedicated member lounge.

SoFi is also an official partner of the two teams, as well as a partner of the 6,000-seat performance venue and Hollywood Park.

SoFi Stadium also signed multi-year sponsorship deals with **Constellation Brands** this spring. **Corona** will become an official cerveza of the Los Angeles Rams, while fellow tenant the Los Angeles Chargers named **Pacifico** as its official beer. Both brands will have logo and marketing rights with the teams and the stadium.

SoFi Stadium will also include the Corona Beach House, a three-level branded area with a grand circular staircase. As part of the Chargers' agreement, a Pacifico Patio space will be created on the north concourse.

The stadium will also be the site of major concerts, with **Taylor Swift** and her Lovers Tour, originally scheduled to open the venue July 25-26, but now set for 2021 due to the pandemic.

Also set for 2021 are **Kenny Chesney**, **Motley Crue** and **Def Leppard**.

When the stadium does open for fans, potential strict safety measures are likely to include that everyone must always wear a face mask unless actively eating or drinking. This would include inside clubs and suites.

Seating blocks will be set up to promote social distancing, with separation of 6ft between blocks of up to 10 guests.

All purchase stations will be strictly cashless. Reverse ATMs will be available on each concourse for those who need to convert cash to gift cards.

Hand sanitising stations will be located throughout the stadium, while health screening protocols are likely to include a waiver for all game attendees to sign before entering as well as temperature checks for staff and potentially, attendees.

SoFi Stadium is also set to host the annual **NCAA LA Bowl, 2022 Super Bowl LVI, 2023 College Football** >>

« **championship**, and the 2028 **Olympic Games** opening and closing ceremonies.

ARCHITECT HKS VIEW

Mark Williams, HKS principal and SoFi Stadium project architect, has been with the firm since 1996 and led many major sports projects, most recently US Bank Stadium for the NFL Minnesota Vikings.

He told *PS&AM*: *“Our relationship with Rams owner/chairman E. Stanley Kroenke dates back to 2014. We worked with the Rams to evaluate their venue at the time, the Edward Jones Dome in St. Louis. When the Rams relocated to Los Angeles, joined by the Los Angeles Chargers, our team re-engaged with Kroenke to bring his vision for their new home to life.*

“Stanley Kroenke’s vision was to create a legacy project and a global stage for the 300-acre Hollywood Park development. The 70,000-seat stadium, 2.5-acre covered outdoor American Airlines plaza, and 6,000 seat performance venue all under one monumental roof canopy would be the signature feature of the development and set a new bar for sports and entertainment venues.

“We are fortunate to work with a stellar team of partners. Walter P Moore

brings unparalleled expertise in seismic engineering, which was critical for this project. Our landscape design partner, Studio-MLA, is known for its integration of indoor/outdoor environments, which is the cornerstone to Kroenke’s vision. On the HKS side, we built a holistic team of researchers, architects, interior designers and technologists to design the venue.”

Williams said SoFi Stadium’s architecture is informed from an extensive research effort of the region.

He said: *“The HKS team considered industry, architecture, lifestyle, climate, geography, and landscape factors to create an authentic Southern California expression and experience. The sweeping coastline and the beauty and strength of the ocean contribute to the clean and dramatic curves of the stadium’s unmistakable architecture.*

“We created a venue that epitomises the SoCal indoor/outdoor lifestyle. The stadium’s roof, seating bowl, concourses, and landscape were all sculpted and designed to create the feel of an outdoor venue while providing all of the flexibility of a traditional domed stadium.

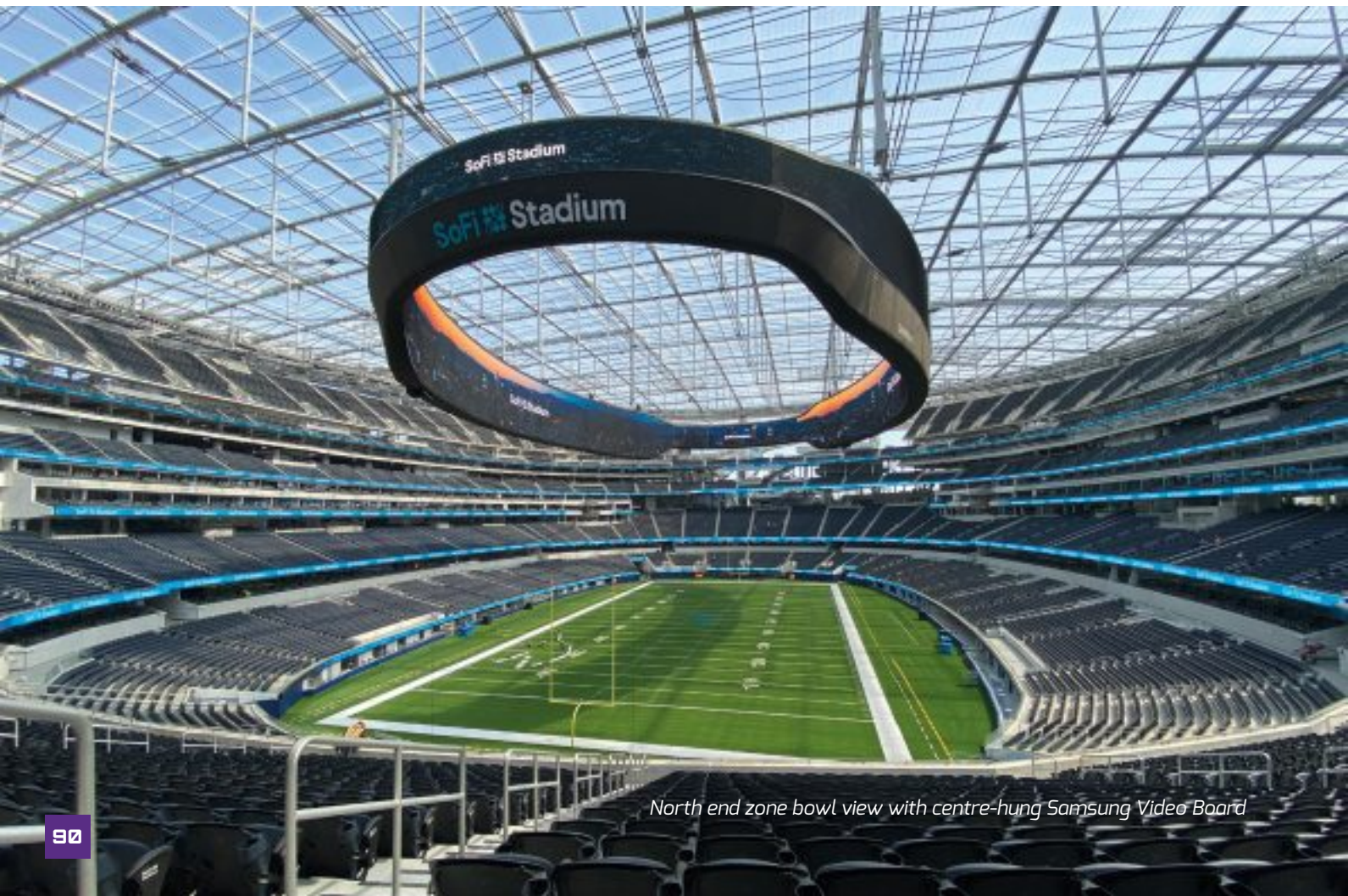
“Some of our initial challenges and what we thought might be constraints

actually guided us to elements that became prominent design features. Due to FAA height regulations with the site’s proximity to LAX airport, we had to lower the event level elevation to approximately 100ft below the existing grade – about two to three times the depth of similar NFL multi-purpose venues.

“Our concern was having to navigate about 75% of the patrons down to their seats and concourses. This is usually done with elevators, escalators, stairs and ramps – typically not a memorable fan experience. We created an indoor/outdoor meandering series of paths that guide fans through spaces in landscaped environments full of amenities to their final destinations. It will arguably be the finest procession into a sports and entertainment venue globally.”

Williams said SoFi Stadium’s single-layer ETFE roof measures a little over 19.5 acres and provides a guarantee, rain or shine, for the multitude of non-NFL events – maintaining connectivity to the outdoors and flooding the stadium with natural light.

He added: *“The ETFE film features a 65% frit pattern to provide relief from direct sun and reduces direct solar gain into the venue. The roof also features*



North end zone bowl view with centre-hung Samsung Video Board

a series of operable panels distributed around the perimeter of the ETFE that can open and close based on the climatic conditions to promote airflow in the stadium and a comfortable fan environment.”

WALTER P MOORE ROLE

SoFi Stadium and Hollywood Park sits between the flight paths of LAX’s two runways and within half a kilometer of the Newport-Inglewood fault.

Rafael Sabelli, **Walter P Moore** Principal and Director of Seismic Design, told PS&AM: “Our firm helped E. Stanley Kroenke’s development team and his HKS-led design group to decipher this riddle through thoughtful engineering, transforming the Hollywood Park site in Inglewood to house the world-class SoFi Stadium.

“To negotiate the site requirements, the engineering team divided the structure into three independent structures: a stadium seating bowl founded at the field level, a 100ft retention system of Mechanically Stabilized Earth, and a soaring roof canopy with columns rising through the retention system and anchored to the undisturbed earth beyond.

“With the structural approaches thus allocated, the stadium could be kept under the FAA ceiling for approaching flight traffic, and a single unsolvable problem became three systems that could each be optimised to meet the design goals of the venue.”

Mark Waggoner, Principal and Senior Project and Roof Design Manager, added: “A key aspect of the SoFi Stadium experience is the ability to be both simultaneously inside and outside. The open perimeter of the roof connects to the canyon spaces that lead seamlessly down into the stadium and combine with the visually open and transparent cable-supported, single-layer ETFE foil roof to deliver an outdoor experience that just happens to be protected from the elements.

“The entire sinuously curved roof structure, which is over 1 million ft², covers not just the stadium but also an adjacent performance venue and American Airlines Plaza between the two structures. The roof canopy is perched atop seismic isolation technology that delivers best-in-class seismic safety for the approximately 70,000 venue patrons.”

Sabelli continued, “The compression ring sits atop segmental columns. To reduce the forces that transfer between the



concrete columns and the lightweight roof structure in a seismic event, Walter P Moore supported the roof on a seismic isolator atop each column

“These isolators allow the roof to move relative to the ground and relative to the supporting columns. The independent isolators also allow each column to move relative to other columns.

“The seismic isolation used for SoFi Stadium incorporates several remarkable features. In addition to the unprecedented scale of the isolated roof structure, the isolators are among the largest used anywhere in the world. Additionally, the isolators allow for the movement of the columns themselves.

“To achieve the excellent seismic performance required, the design team adopted an enhanced design approach. The target seismic performance was ensured through comprehensive analysis, complemented by a testing program. Seismic isolation offers an alternative to more commonly used

seismic systems and is uniquely suited to such iconic structures.

“For a sophisticated and iconic structure such as SoFi Stadium, seismic isolation is increasingly a tool for sophisticated building owners to protect massive structures. We believe this is truly the safest facility in the world.”

Gannon concluded: “All development projects are unique and present their own set of challenges. Together we have created a unique venue designed with Los Angeles and its residents at the centre of virtually every detail. The size and scope of this project are unmatched.

“It has been the journey of a lifetime to deliver on this element of Stan Kroenke’s vision. Each part of the stadium offers fans a unique experience. From our 70,000ft² videoboard to being the first indoor-outdoor stadium, it is truly a special moment for everyone who worked on the project.” ■

SOFI STADIUM	
Project Team and Fact File	
Location	Inglewood, California
Opening Date	September 2020
Construction Cost	\$5 billion
Owner	E. Stanley Kroenke
Operator	SoFi Stadium and Hollywood Park
Capacity	70,000, expandable to 100,000 for Super Bowl & other major events
Architect	HKS Inc.
Project Manager	Legends Global Planning
General Contractor	Turner/AECOM Hunt joint venture
Structural Engineer	Walter P Moore
Services Engineer	Henderson Engineers, Inc.
Videoboards & Electronics	Samsung Electronics America
F&B Concessionaire	Legends Hospitality
Major Tenants	NFL Los Angeles Rams, NFL Los Angeles Chargers
Amenities	260 luxury suites, 13,000+ premium Club Seats; SoFi has 37,000ft ² branded VIP activation space including Members Lounge; HKS-designed, Samsung outdoor products for 70,000 ft ² centre-hung, dual-sided 4k end-to-end videoboard.