

GEODIS PARK HITS ALL THE RIGHT NOTES

GEODIS Park in Nashville has opened as the largest soccer-specific stadium in North America.

GEODIS Park, the largest soccer specific stadium in the United States and Canada, debuted on May 1 in Nashville, Tennessee. The 1-1 draw between Nashville SC and Philadelphia Union was played out in front of a sell-out crowd of 30,109.

Built in the heart of Nashville's Wedgewood-Houston neighbourhood at the historic Nashville Fairgrounds, the \$335 million **Populous/Hastings** designed GEODIS Park is set to become one of the premier sports and entertainment destinations in the United States.

The new venue is highly multi-functional, serving as the home for **Major League Soccer's Nashville SC**, with the versatility to accommodate other premier events.

The seating capacity of just over 30,000 for soccer allows the MLS to have a destination stadium in one of the nation's most vibrant cities with the ability to host larger events and matches.

The stadium design focused on encompassing the true spirit of Nashville in its aesthetic, materials, and function.



The steel, wood, and brick materials used in its construction are meant to suggest the industrial origins of WeHo.

While the facility is state-of-the-art, it also blends seamlessly within the historic architecture of the area and meshes with the fabric of the city and surrounding neighbourhoods. Justin Barton, Principal, **Walter P Moore**, who served as overall

structural engineer of record for the project, told PS&AM: "From the beginning the owner wanted something that was 'uniquely Nashville' and that was a phrase that the design team really latched on to.

When you turn on a game and you see GEODIS Park, you know you're in Nashville. It's a building that fits into the



neighbourhood. Going around Nashville, it's a city that is really focused on materials. You see a lot of exposed steel, a lot of brick and a lot of wood.

All three of those materials played a prominent role in the design of the stadium itself. As we were going through the design it became apparent early that it was going to be a predominantly exposed structure with a lot of steel. That then started to drive some decisions in that the exposed steel structure really became the architecture of the building.

"We thought about how we could shape the steel design and detail the steel in such a way that it really speaks to Nashville, that it speaks to the team and that it speaks to the project as a whole."

Barton said that the Walter P Moore team was responsible for all the connection design and modelling, giving them control over how the finished venue looked.

"That's exciting for us because a lot of the time the structure gets covered up by walls, but here the structure became the prominent architectural feature."

CLOSE TO THE ACTION

The stadium features a 360-degree canopy, a 65ft wide shared concourse and a safe standing supporter's section.

Just 150ft of distance separate the last row in GEODIS Park and the touchline.

In addition to being the official home to Nashville SC, GEODIS Park will serve as a leading multipurpose venue for concerts and community activities as well as a hub for Nashville-area businesses to utilise throughout the year.

The supporters' section on the north end accommodates 3,200 fans in a safe-standing mode.

Most premium seats are on the west side, including 27 suites and three clubs.

There are 18 loge boxes on the half-way line in the lower level on the west side.

There are about 4,000 premium seats in total with four clubs, 92 loge seats, 25 suites, hospitality suite, corner kick terraces and video board terraces

Construction of the stadium started in July 2020 and finished in April 2022, seven weeks ahead of schedule.

A lot of the major steelwork was fabricated off site to speed up construction, as Barton explained:

"One thing we did push was trying to get as much of it pre-assembled as possible. All around the building there are canopies in front of the concession stands that are about 40 feet long by 15 feet wide. We designed and detailed those to be prefabricated, to be fully assembled

at the steel fabricator's plant and then brought out on a truck as a single piece and then just lifted into place in one lift.

"That enabled all those connections to be shop welded together. It gives a cleaner look and also increases the durability over time because there's no way for water to get into it. Its fully sealed all the way around. It also gets a better paint coat to it."

The stadium has been built on the historic Nashville Fairgrounds site and adjacent to Nashville Speedway.

Barton added: *"In many ways the soccer stadium further accentuates that as a gathering spot for the citizens of Nashville."*

"Overall, the project turned out really well. It's exciting to see what happens when people collaborate from a design standpoint, from a construction standpoint and everybody gets out of their silos and really thinks about the project as a whole and are willing to try some new things. Delivering that fabrication model was something that hasn't been done a lot before. I think getting people comfortable trying new systems and new approaches in a better shorter way, benefits the owner."

The most rewarding part of the project was being able to provide more for the owner and do it in a better way and that resulted in my opinion in a better overall project."

Brent Hungerford, Principal Walter P Moore, added: *"Bringing the construction >>*



>> a little bit over to the design side is something we're big fans of just because it does help the project so much from a schedule and problems point of view. It just gets rid of so many issues that pop up later in construction. I think this is a really great example of that being a success."

fixtures and plumbing fixtures were difficult to get hold of and there was actually a storm that went through Nashville and hit one of the warehouses where a lot of the light fixtures were stored. So they even had the challenge of finding replacements to overcome and figuring out what was still usable."

GEODIS PARK

PROJECT FACTFILE

Tenant	Nashville SC
Owner	Sports Authority of the Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County
Operator	Nashville SC
Architect	Populous, Hastings
Owners' rep	CAA ICON
General contractor	Mortenson; Messer
Structural engineer	Walter P. Moore; Logan Patri Engineering
Mechanical/electrical/plumbing engineer	ME Engineers; DFH Services
Seat provider	Irwin
Concessionaire	Levy
Video boards	Daktronics

CHALLENGING TIMES

ME Engineers were responsible for the mechanical, electrical, plumbing and technology systems design for the building.

Jeff Sawarynski, Senior Principal, ME Engineers, said: "It's amazing. Of all the stadiums we've worked on, the architecture is very squared off and really defined. The bowl is designed in such a way that you really are on top of the game.

"It was certainly a challenging project. With MLS stadiums, the budgets are always fairly challenging but then of course the pandemic came along, so that didn't help either. The availability of material has also been a real challenge for us in a lot of the sports projects through the last couple years. Light

Sawarynski said the stadium had been finished inside and out to high aesthetic standards.

"I'm a mechanical engineer and I sit in the bowl and I can't find the equipment we've installed. I know it's there, but we really did work hard to conceal everything. It's a very clean look and it looks amazing both inside and outside.

"One of the things that's really unique is that as Nashville is the music capital of the country, they really did focus on show power. This stadium has the most show power of any soccer specific stadium in the country because they knew that concerts were going to be big. They also have a stage where they invite guitarists to every game to do guitar riffs. There's Nashville special stuff that goes on here that no other stadium

has." Sawarynski said the electrical service has full redundancy. "We ended up working with the utility service to get separate circuits sourced so when they brought the multiple services to the building they ended up being fully redundant, which showed commitment from the ownership to have that level of service of the building."

PICTURE PERFECT

To engage the fans, Nashville SC selected Daktronics to design, manufacture and install six LED displays throughout the stadium.

As well as the main video display at one end of the facility, auxiliary, fascia, field-level and entry displays are included. The main feature is a video display featuring 10-millimeter pixel spacing and measuring approximately 34ft high by 60ft wide.

An auxiliary video display in the opposite corner of the stadium from the main display also features 10-millimeter pixel spacing and measures more than 20ft high by 54ft wide.

The seating colour scheme, meanwhile, mimics the electric gold and acoustic blue kits worn by the Nashville SC players. This is meant to represent sound waves and vibrations as a salute to Nashville's music industry.

Naming rights for the venue were awarded to GEODIS, a France-based industry-leading global supply chain operator. With its North American headquarters based in Brentwood, Tenn., it is one of the fastest-growing logistics companies in the United States, employing more than 15,000 people across 19 campuses and more than 230 sites. GEODIS is also a major employer in the Middle Tennessee area with more than 2,000 workers in the region.

As a global showcase for the company, GEODIS has received prominent branding on the stadium's exterior, interior and rooftop, including flagship signage above the main entrance welcoming attendees to GEODIS Park.

Additionally, the partnership features naming rights to one premium club and several innovative programmes to support the Nashville community. For example, GEODIS will serve as the presenting partner of both a new soccer league focused on underserved neighbourhoods in the surrounding community and the "One Nashville Under Gold" flag, a photo-mosaic with a collection of images representing Nashvillians from all walks of life that will be presented at every home game. ■

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Photo: Nashville Soccer Club

Comprehensive Sports Venue Life Cycle Services including Structural Engineering, Diagnostics, Enclosure Engineering, Construction Engineering, Parking, and Traffic Consulting

Bart Miller, PE
Sports Market Leader

Chris Pinto, PE
Sports Venue Diagnostics Leader