



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



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**MAYOR LIGHTFOOT, THE CHICAGO PARK DISTRICT AND CHICAGO FIRE  
SOCCER CLUB ANNOUNCE THE TEAM'S RETURN TO SOLDIER FIELD**

*The Fire to Return to Soldier Field starting in March 2020*

**CHICAGO** – Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot, Chicago Park District Superintendent & CEO Mike Kelly, and the Chicago Fire Soccer Club today announced that the team will return to Soldier Field to play their home games starting in 2020. SeatGeek Stadium in Bridgeview, Illinois has been home to the Fire since 2006, and the team will continue to utilize the stadium as a training facility and headquarters for Chicago Fire Youth development programs.

“Chicago is the greatest sports town in the world, and I am thrilled to welcome the Chicago Fire back home to Soldier Field, giving families in every one of our neighborhoods a chance to cheer for their team in the heart of our beautiful downtown,” said Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot. “From arts, culture, business, sports, and entertainment, Chicago is second to none in creating a dynamic destination for residents and visitors alike, and I look forward to many years of exciting Chicago Fire soccer to come.”

The Chicago Fire was founded in 1997 and began playing in Major League Soccer in 1998. The Fire won the MLS Cup and the Lamar Hunt U.S. Open Cup its first season, and additional U.S. Open Cups in 2000, 2003, and 2006. As an early MLS expansion team, the Fire played at Soldier Field from 1998 until 2001 and then from 2003 to 2005 before moving to Bridgeview in 2006.

“The Chicago Fire rounds out an incredible legacy of sports teams that call the city home,” said Superintendent Kelly. “Being able to bring the Chicago Fire back to where it got started, to the 61,000 seat Soldier Field that will bring so many to Chicago is a win-win for everyone.”

The Chicago Fire will open its 2020 season on March 21 against the reigning MLS Cup champions and current U.S. Open Cup Champions, Atlanta United FC. Major League Soccer has 34 regular season games – 17 away and 17 home games played between March and October. All regular season home games will be played at



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Soldier Field. Any regular and post-season play will be scheduled to not interfere with Chicago Bears home games. The new agreement is for an initial term of three years, with two additional three-year terms and two additional one-year terms.

“Our Club needs to be located centrally where all of Chicago can enjoy it,” said Chicago Fire Owner & General Manager, Joe Mansueto. “Soldier Field is the perfect location. In my view, part of being a world-class city today is having a professional soccer team located downtown. You see what’s happening in Seattle, Portland, Los Angeles and Atlanta. Their Major League Soccer teams are bringing their cities together and have become an important part of the cultural fabric of the city. We will make that happen for Chicago too.”

Chicago is home to seven major-league teams, including the Chicago Fire Soccer Club; the 2016 MLB World Series Champion Chicago Cubs; the NHL 2015 Stanley Cup Champion Chicago Blackhawks; the 2005 MLB World Series Champion Chicago White Sox; six-time NBA Champion Chicago Bulls; the 1985 World Champion Chicago Bears; and WNBA finalist Chicago Sky. The city is also home to over a dozen minor, amateur league teams including baseball, hockey, arena football, rugby and others.

### **About Chicago Fire Soccer Club**

The Chicago Fire Soccer Club was founded in 1997 on the 126th anniversary of the Great Chicago Fire, and played its 22nd season in Major League Soccer in 2019. The Club's charitable arm, the Chicago Fire Foundation, was recognized by ESPN as the 2019 Sports Humanitarian Team of the Year for its efforts to make a difference in the community. For more information on the Chicago Fire Soccer Club, visit [www.Chicago-Fire.com](http://www.Chicago-Fire.com).

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