

**Product**

Planar Powered By  
Lighthouse LED  
Video Screens

**Location**

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

**Industry**

Sports Venue

**Application**

Scoreboard  
Digital Signage

**Partner**

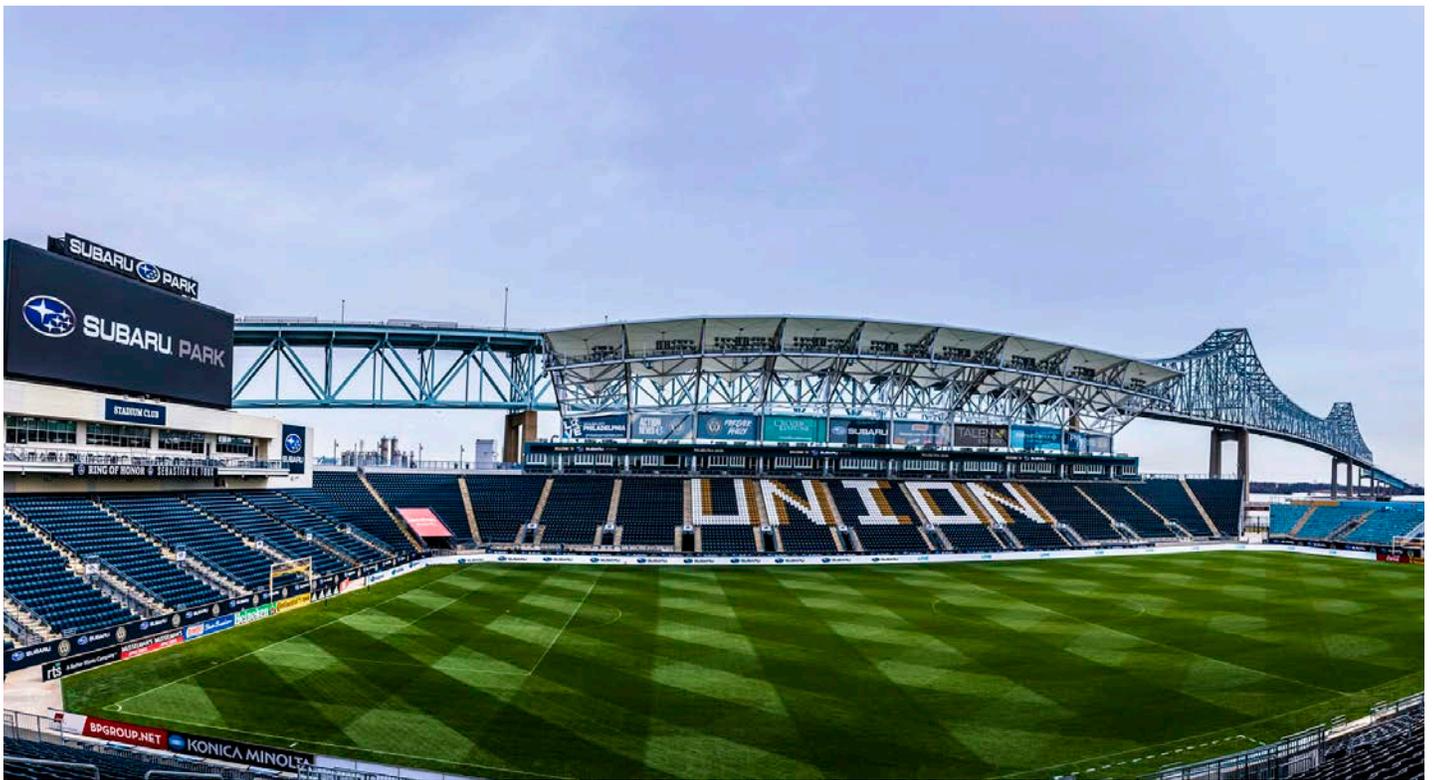
Lighthouse

Visual Technology Upgrade at Subaru Park Boosts Game Experience for Philadelphia Union Fans

# Philadelphia Union— Subaru Park

Philadelphia is a sports-centric city, hosting several professional teams. The newest addition is the Philadelphia Union of Major League Soccer (MLS), which began play in 2010 as an expansion team. A member of the league's Eastern Conference, the Union plays their home matches at Subaru Park, a soccer-dedicated stadium located in Chester that overlooks the Delaware River. Built in 2010, the 18,500-seat multipurpose stadium features 30 luxury suites, a full-service club restaurant and sideline roofs for protection against the elements.

In the summer of 2019 and ahead of the 2020 season, the Philadelphia Union set out to upgrade its existing LED scoreboard, which had been installed when the stadium was built and was approaching its end of life. The soccer club selected outdoor LED video wall technology from Planar and Lighthouse. The display integrations include a new giant outdoor LED scoreboard as well as LED video walls designed as ribbon boards.



“First and foremost, the purpose of the LED upgrades was to elevate the entertainment value of the stadium,” said Carl Mandell, director of broadcast and video production at the Philadelphia Union. “In reviewing the investment, the team owner said that he wanted to see the sharpest replays and highlight videos. He wanted to see it large and to be able to feel it through the pictures. With the installation complete, the new displays look fantastic and 100 percent better than what we had before.”

Tim McDermott, Philadelphia Union president, said Planar was chosen because they had the right products and the expertise to manage the construction and installation process.

“The result of Planar’s Sports and Entertainment team will dramatically enhance the experience for Philadelphia Union fans at Subaru Park for years to come,” he said. “We look forward to partnering with them again on future projects.”

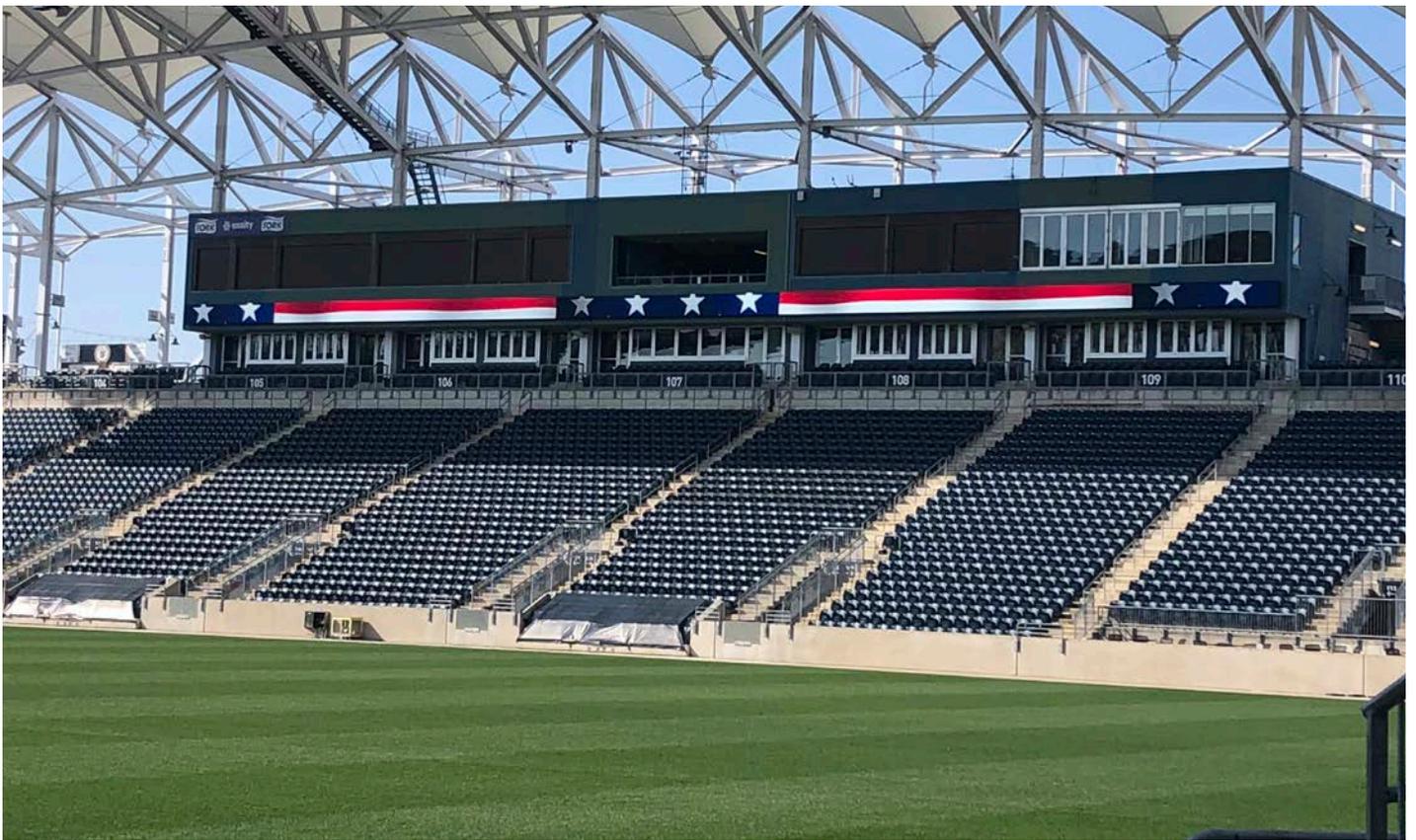
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— **Tim McDermott,**  
President, Philadelphia Union

## LED scoreboard expands partner opportunities

As the centerpiece of the stadium, a nearly 109-foot-wide, 32-foot-tall outdoor LED scoreboard with a 10mm pixel pitch was installed at the north end of Subaru Park. With 3,440 square feet of LED surface, the digital footprint of the new scoreboard is 281 percent greater than the previous one. The resolution is also 200 percent higher.

Compared to the old board—which had a video screen flanked on either side by Trivision billboards—the new LED solution provides much more in the way of both sponsorship opportunities and creative advertising, according to Mandell.



“For our signage on rotation, we’ve gone from 10 ads over the course of an event to the ability to have close to 45 different placements,” Mandell said. “And even though our capacity for ad inventory has increased, the board still looks cleaner. It’s less cluttered.”

On the creative side, the flexibility of the new LED scoreboard gives them more options. “Our go-to layout is a video screen in the middle with space for three ads on either side, but we can morph it any way we want to,” Mandell said. “We can split the board up several different ways or go full screen. It gives us the ability to take a vision and implement it.”

MLS’ goal is to provide an authentic experience to it’s fans which puts restrictions on how we approach in-game sponsorship. “A corporate partner can’t sponsor a goal and the league doesn’t want random in-game sponsorship mentions because it’s unauthentic to the game,” Mandell said. “So, we’ve gotten creative with stoppage time and our substitutions—those moments when fans are more apt to look up at the board.”

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— **Carl Mandell,**  
*Director of Broadcast and  
Video Production, Philadelphia Union*

Called ‘moments of exclusivity,’ premium ad placements were developed to run during these brief pauses, offering partners select visibility on the scoreboard. “During a substitution, each side of the board will wipe clean to show the incoming player with a sponsor on one side and the outgoing player with a sponsor on the other side,” Mandell said. “Then, at the instant there is stoppage time, we created a moment of exclusivity where the scoreboard changes color and a corporate partner is featured on the entire canvas.

Whereas in the past we were confined to a small screen with static ads on either side, now the possibilities are endless.”

# Keeping fans updated and engaged

LED video walls designed as ribbon boards in Subaru Park include:

- Two LED upper fascia ribbons with a 16mm pixel pitch—a nearly 181-foot-wide ‘west ribbon’ and a nearly 357-foot-wide ‘east ribbon.’
- A 549-foot-wide LED field ribbon with a 10mm pixel pitch.

“The ribbon boards allow us to give fans what they’ve been asking for—real-time game stats including MLS scores and updates,” Mandell said. “After 10 years, the fan base in Philadelphia has become more sophisticated with soccer and MLS. They’re not just coming to games because it’s a new experience. They are invested and educated on the other teams and players. The fans want to know what’s happening around the league.”

The LED ribbons are employed like ESPN tickers, pushing automated data to the screens. “Anytime somebody scores in another match, an alert is triggered, taking over the entire ribbon,” Mandell said. “It displays the team and the person who scored.”

The ribbons are also used to generate excitement in the stadium during introductions or when a Union player scores a goal. And, looking ahead, Mandell sees another potential application for the ribbons: a medium for displaying fantasy soccer data. “It’s only a matter of time before fantasy really catches on in MLS,” Mandell said. “We now have the digital real estate to keep our fans updated when that time comes.”