

Toronto Scottish Rugby Football Club

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GROUNDBREAKING SPORTS FIELD DEAL SIGNED BY NON-PROFIT RUGBY CLUB

A midtown rugby club, the Toronto Scottish R.F.C., has signed a financing deal that could help alleviate the city's chronic shortage of sports fields. The deal is based on the rugby club's investment of \$1.5 million in a sports field in need of redevelopment at a high-school near Lawrence Avenue and Avenue Road.

The Toronto District School Board will use the rugby club's capital to build a multi-sport replacement field, which conforms to international rugby standards while also being available for other sports, and will also be safer, more durable, and more available than the current field.

Students at Lawrence Park Collegiate Institute will enjoy daily use of the new field for physical education classes, intramural, and inter-school competition, as well as tournaments, in multiple sports, including soccer, field hockey and football.

In addition, the Toronto District School Board will enjoy much greater rental revenue from community users. The more durable synthetic field enables more intensive use over more months of the year. Maintenance costs and environmental impacts will be reduced, as seeding, cutting, watering, fertilizers and pesticides will no longer be needed. Community access will be increased as the synthetic field is less affected by spring floods and winter freezing.

The new synthetic field will be safer than the existing field, which was pitted by weather and overuse. Its condition caused a number of student injuries in recent years. The agreement between the rugby club and the School Board specifies World Rugby standards for construction, monitoring, and maintenance, assuring a firm, level surface with sufficient cushioning to protect athletes in contact sports.

This deal affords the students, the community, and the rugby club, greater access to a safer field than can be secured any other way. Student use is guaranteed from 6am – 6pm, every day, for the entire school year. Community users, including the rugby club, will have evening and weekend access, year round (weather permitting), and daytime use over the summer months.

Under this agreement, the rugby club is guaranteed only 442 hours of use annually, compared with 2,160 hours of school use, leaving 4,808 hours of availability for community use. This amounts to less than 10% of annual availability, and less than 20% during the 6-month rugby season covered by the license agreement. On balance, community access is substantially increased relative to current field availability, even after the hours granted the rugby club in return for its investment.

Perhaps as importantly, this agreement with the Toronto Scottish RFC provides a template for much needed community investment where it's needed in support of student and community health, fitness, and athletic achievement.

This funding model may also have applications across the City of Toronto where there are similar constraints on community access to sports fields. Toronto's Parks, Forestry, and Recreation Division has tabled a long term capital request for 45 new sports fields in anticipation of continued population growth. By seeking community investment in new fields on the rugby club's model, the durability and utilization rates of existing fields can be dramatically improved at little net cost to the municipality.

The Toronto Scottish RFC is a community, non-profit organization that's been operating in the LPCI area for 72 years. Its board is elected from its hundreds of members, including players, social members, and alumni. Its general membership ratified unanimous Board approval of the field licensing agreement, culminating a lengthy and complex negotiation. The Club's volunteer negotiating team was comprised of Carolynna Gabriel, Jerry Marriott, and Doug Simpson, each applying their expertise in real estate development, law, finance, and non-profit management to the design and execution of a workable agreement for both parties.

"Toronto Scottish RFC has been working with TDSB and our community partners for more than five years on this groundbreaking field development, and we are excited to move forward with this project, which will allow us to continue to bring rugby to the community, while also providing a professional-grade field surface for other users for years to come. We are very excited that Lawrence Park Collegiate, local community organizations, and the Toronto Scottish will be able to utilize what will be a world-class sports field surface for a wide variety of sports, and we thank all who have been involved and have supported this process to date".

- Brendan Chapman, President, Toronto Scottish Rugby Football Club

For all inquiries into Toronto Scottish RFC's field financing deal for Lawrence Park Collegiate Institute, or regarding this arrangement's general suitability as a model for future School Board or City sports field developments, please contact Toronto Scottish RFC's Communications Director, Martin Blake (alumni@torontoscottish.ca), who will respond to general inquiries, and refer relevant requests to the appropriate principals as needed, including inquiries from the media.

For more information regarding the Toronto Scottish R.F.C. please visit www.torontoscottish.ca

