

Happy Birthday Columbus Crew!

Thursday, 14 May 2009

Columbus Crew Stadium, the home of Major League Soccer's Columbus Crew, recently celebrated the tenth anniversary of the first match held on May 15, 1999. Crew Stadium was the first stadium built in the United States specifically for soccer. The soccer and event venue was built and financed by American sports pioneer Lamar Hunt. It was Hunt's belief that for the team to be successful it must have its own venue that would allow the team to control its revenue streams when it came to concessions, parking, sponsorship as well as non soccer events. Many were critical of the 28 million dollar investment, questioning whether professional soccer could ever become a successful spectator sport in the United States. However, the model was successful, and has inspired the construction of seven other stadiums in the league. As part of the tenth anniversary celebration, the club invited all of the former Head Groundsmen to the anniversary match vs. Kansas City on May 9th. Crew Stadium has a long history of having the best playing surface in Major League Soccer, despite its grueling event schedule that includes: a full MLS season, US open cup matches, International qualifiers, college soccer, High School football, festivals and concerts. Crew Stadium Groundskeepers have gone on to work at Paul Brown Stadium, Ohio State University Department of Horticulture and Crop Science, and The Boston Red Sox Grounds Crew Alumni, top left: From left to right - Matt Williams (2003-2007), Darian Daily (1999-2003), Brett Tanner (2008-Present), and Eugene Mayer (consulting turfgrass agronomist 1998-Present). Not shown: Weston Appelfeller (2007-2008)