

# Fenway Park gets new irrigation system

**A** new Toro irrigation system was part of an overall turf renovation project at Fenway Park late in 2004, which began with the excavation of 16.4 million pounds of soil. The upgrade was prompted by a number of concerns, including improved safety and playability of the surface, but also because the turfgrass had been so demanding to grow.

"That turf had certainly served its time, but it was old, and built like fields used to be built," said David Mellor, Director of Grounds at Fenway. "We had no automatic irrigation and very limited drainage. It was a heavy soil, so once it reached its capacity of water retention, there was no place for the water to go. It was a challenge to have the proper amount of water, especially in that soil."

Mellor chose Toro because of his long-standing relationship with the company and his local distributor, Turf Products Corp (TPC).

Toro's TR70XTP series rotors were installed in the outfield surface. Other short-radius rotors and spray heads were installed around uniquely shaped parts of the Fenway field, such as the bullpens and foul areas.

For its zone valves, Mellor chose 220 Series Brass with EZ-Reg pressure regulation to maintain matched pressure throughout their field and obtain the most uniform application. A Custom Command Series 36-station metal controller controls the entire system.

"It's like night and day," said Mellor. "With the flexibility, the throw pattern, being able to adjust its arcs, it certainly helps with the uniqueness of an athletic field layout. The field will be healthier because of the efficient and more uniform application of water dispersing from the heads versus hand watering. . . also having an automated system that comes on at 2 or 3 in the morning, or being able to syringe something on a hot day will help increase our efficiency."

Renovating the surface and improving the drainage also enabled Fenway to remove the crown in the field - something once common on such playing surfaces. "We have a flat infield and center field now," said Mellor. **ST**

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