

Chicago White Sox Sign New Naming Rights for Stadium until 2029

September 4, 2016 | Sara Michalowicz



The Chicago White Sox announced a new naming rights deal for their ball park, currently known as U.S. Cellular Field, or for White Sox fans, "The Cell." Starting November 1, U.S. Cellular Field, will become Guaranteed Rate Field through at least 2029.

The Illinois Sports Facilities Authority (ISFA), who owns and operates the ball park, approved the name change at its board meeting on August 24. According to ISFA Manny Sanchez, this deal with Guaranteed Rate could potentially generate up to \$6.4 million of revenue for the facility if extended through 2030.

Brooks Boyer, White Sox senior vice president of sales and marketing, explained that U.S. Cellular had exited the Chicago market in 2013, but remained a dedicated partner for the Chicago White Sox.

When thought of changing the naming rights deal came about, the White Sox hoped to find a business with local roots. According to Boyer, the team approached U.S. Cellular to end the deal early in hopes of finding a new stadium sponsor. Guaranteed Rate was one of the first calls made by Boyer towards potential companies interested in a deal and he immediately felt as though it was a good fit for their ballpark.

This is the third name change the Chicago White Sox home stadium has undergone since 1991. The ballpark was originally known as Comiskey Park from 1910 through 1991, paying tribute to the founder of the Chicago White Sox, Charles A. Comiskey. In 1991, it was known as New Comiskey Park, until 2003 when U.S. Cellular signed a 68-million-dollar naming rights agreement for the 20 years to follow. That 20-year naming rights agreement with U.S. Cellular was cut short to 13 years. In 2013, U.S. Cellular was bought out by Sprint in the Chicagoland area, which diminished the popularity of the field dramatically.

The name change garnered a lot of attention on social media since the announcement on August 24. As of now, most will agree that Guaranteed Rate Field does not exactly roll off the tongue, but neither did U.S. Cellular Field in 2003, at which point fans nicknamed the park "The Cell."

Boyer and Guaranteed Rate CEO Victor Ciardelli said they will let fans determine the ball park's nickname "organically."

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