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Shelburne soccer players get same grass used by pros

When Brazil and Chile kicked off to their friendly FIFA game in Toronto's Rogers Centre last Tuesday evening, they played on sod that was grown not far from Dufferin, at Alliston, Beeton and Cookstown.

And, when the 500-strong Shelburne Soccer League gets to use the town's new, regulation size, field next spring, the sod that was good enough for FIFA when it covered the concrete pad in the Rogers Centre is the very sod the Shelburne players will be using.

CTV Barrie reported last Tuesday that 13 transport trucks carrying 600 rolls of sod from Zander Sod of Kettleby had arrived at the Centre before sunrise, and a crew of about 40 set about placing the ?extra thick, extra wide? sod in the 11 hours available before the evening game.

After the game, they'll have just four hours to roll the sod back up and then to truck it directly to Shelburne. It couldn't immediately be learned whether the Zander crew would spread the sod on the Greenwood Park pitch or if that would be left to Shelburne's contractor, Advanced Landscaping.

In either event, the local league is likely to consider itself lucky, as this isn't just any old sod.

According to CTV following interviews with Claus Zander and the project manager, it is a special sod, ?designed to withstand the turns, pivots and dives of elite soccer players. The grass is highly regarded because it repairs itself quickly.?

The new Shelburne soccer field is a long-awaited and debated half-million-dollar project, a third paid for with federal Community Infrastructure Improvement Funding, Development Charges, and about $80,000 from other sources.

It is not just a field. It will have spectator seating, lights for night games, and ample parking.

It will also have an irrigation system and ample drainage.

Soccer is said to be Canada's fastest growing game, and the national team has qualified to compete in the 2014 World Cup in Brazil, although it has been dropping in the rankings in the past few weeks.

By Wes Keller