

Published August 16th, 2023

## San Jose Earthquakes II team makes premier appearance at Saint Mary's

By Jon Kingdon



Courtesy Saint Mary's College Athletics

Last Saturday, with a wine and beer fest that went from 2 to 5 p.m. and a soccer game between the San Jose Earthquakes II and the Austin Football Club II, Saint Mary's College was the place to be.

With just two weeks to get the word out that the Earthquakes II and Austin FC II were going to play on the Saint Mary's soccer stadium, on a bright and sunny day, it was a standing room only crowd ranging from infants to senior citizens and all the ages in between, filling the stands along with several spectators sitting on the grass sidelines and endzones.

For the record, Austin FC II defeated the Earthquakes II 2-0.

The game was set up to determine whether Saint Mary's field could prove to be a viable facility for the San Jose Earthquakes II to play some or all of their regular season games in the future with the intention of bringing more exposure for the team in the East Bay.

The Earthquakes II are the equivalent to a triple A team in baseball or a G League team in basketball. With their season starting in April and going through October, as

this point, they would be playing 12 to 15 home games, if not more.

"This is the first time we've put on an event like this at Saint Mary's," said Mike Matoso, the Vice President for Intercollegiate Athletics at Saint Mary's. "The Earthquakes approached us and we're using this as a kind of a test game to see if it goes well with the facility and the fan reaction to show if there is an opportunity for them and us to make this a longer commitment."

"The Earthquakes are excited to partner with The Town FC to bring this professional soccer match to Moraga while benefiting local youth soccer programs," said Earthquakes President Jared Shawlee. "As a soccer facility, it's amazing. If they were to add lights for night games, it would help to make games provide a different environment where you get the energy of a night game, but Saint Mary's is still a great place to play in the daytime as well. It has great size for the Earthquakes II team and they're able to set the food and beverage trucks for the fans. It's also great to see the kids' soccer field on the far side of the field. I like the parking setup because you want to be able to park, walk and kind of congregate the people as they are marching to the stadium, so I think it's a perfect setup with a beautiful backdrop."

Moraga Mayor Renata Sos has been wholly supportive of the idea of the Earthquakes II coming to Saint Mary's. "I think it's great for Moraga and I'm very excited," Sos said. "Moraga is such a sports savvy town with Saint Mary's having these fantastic facilities. My vision is that, whether it's men's or women's soccer or other professional sports, there may be a place for teams to compete here which I think would be good for the college, the town and our community's appetite for athletics, which is boundless, so I think it would be a very good fit."

For Matoso, the benefits of the Earthquakes II coming to Saint Mary's would extend beyond the school. "Something like this could be cool for the community," Matoso said. "We've met with the Earthquakes for the past few months, and they think this is a perfect venue for them."

Tennyson Wilson, the Head of Club Affairs for the Town Football Club has been very involved with bringing Saturday's game to Saint Mary's. "Town FC is a new soccer startup and we've been working with the town of Moraga and the Earthquakes in terms of hosting pro games at the college next year," Wilson said. "We're trying to get a run of the venue to see how it works out and hope to have more of these games as we head into 2024. It's our hope to be the minor league team for the Earthquakes and be the feeder team for them. Right now, we're the connective tissue - working closely with the Earthquakes and the town and trying to bring all of the pieces together. Moraga has been very supportive about bringing pro soccer to the area and they've been willing to support us in various ways and working to make sure that traffic doesn't impact the residents. We're hoping to help the town continue to grow and also support Saint Mary's in that growth."

Wilson also feels that in the end, lights at the stadium are an important issue. "We definitely would need

lights when we stream the games on Apple TV," Wilson said. "As we get deeper into the year, lights would be required."

Matoso echoes that concern: "If this is to be a permanent thing, lights would have to be required. From that standpoint, it would be great for Saint Mary's, Moraga, and the Earthquakes. If we play a game at 3 o'clock on a Friday, we may get 300 people. If we play it at 7 p.m., we'll get 3,000 people for that game."

Saint Mary's head coach Adam Cooper welcomes the opportunity to share the field with the Earthquakes: "I think it'll help in a lot of ways starting with the notoriety, facilities, upgrades, and capital improvements which would also help. It's also a benefit in getting people onto the campus at Saint Mary's. It would also help the town of Moraga with their food and beverage industry. It would be a win-win for everyone in my opinion."

With a full house, a loud and appreciative crowd, perfect weather, and no off-field incidents, it would appear that Saint Mary's and Moraga have passed the first test.

Reach the reporter at: [sportsdesk@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:sportsdesk@lamorindaweekly.com)

[back](#)

Copyright © Lamorinda Weekly, Moraga CA