

# Candlestick seats will soon fill SF's Kezar Stadium, thanks to Deltas soccer team

By [Douglas Zimmerman](#) on December 2, 2016 at 4:30 AM



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San Francisco is reclaiming some of its professional football history thanks to the city's new professional soccer team.

More than 3,800 Candlestick Park seats from the former home of the San Francisco 49ers are being installed during the next two weeks at the team's original SF home, Kezar Stadium. They'll join the Candlestick seats already installed at Kezar during stadium improvements in 2014 and 2015.

The seats were acquired by the San Francisco Deltas, which won approval earlier this year to play its home games at Kezar Stadium from the SF Rec and Parks Department. The pro soccer team will start its inaugural season with a friendly against the San Jose Earthquakes in February.



Photo: Douglas Zimmerman / SFGate



IMAGE 1 OF 22 | CANDLESTICK SEATS BEING INSTALLED AT KEZAR STADIUM

Robert Raney installs former Candlestick seats at Kezar Stadium on Nov. 30th, 2016.

The new seating is part of \$1 million in improvements the team agreed to make to use Kezar Stadium.

Although the seats ended up costing being double the estimate, Deltas CEO Brian Andrés Helmick felt it was the right choice. "We have to make decisions as fans," he said. "We are fans first."

"It is the right thing to do," Helmick continued. "There is a connection there between Kezar and the 49ers. Candlestick also has a connection with the 49ers. There is already 1,000 of the seats here. Imagine taking it from 1,000 to approximately 5,000 red seats in that stadium? It's going to look beautiful."

All of the seats were installed by S & S Seating, a company based out of Indiana that specializes in retrieving and rehabilitating pro sports seating from stadiums being torn down. The company handled the sale of approximately 38,000 Candlestick souvenir seats sold to fans by the 49ers and the San Francisco Giants.



Photo: Mike Kepka / The Chronicle

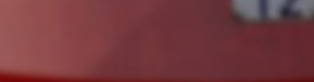


IMAGE 13 OF 20

Seats on the sunny side of Candlestick Park.

When the Deltas first considered seating options for Kezar, the team was informed by the city all remaining seats had been destroyed during the demolition of Candlestick.

The team spent time considered several different seating options for the stadium. However, the San Francisco Recreation and Parks Dept. raised concerns about the look and maintenance costs involved in the team's possible choices.

As the search continued, Helmick once again wondered if any seats might have survived. The Deltas contacted S & S Seating directly and found the company had about 3,800 additional Candlestick seats in a warehouse in Indiana. The extra seats were the remainder the company did not sell as souvenirs.

S&S Seating specializes in removing seats from large professional stadiums that are being torn down (including the former Fulton County Stadium in Atlanta, Busch Stadium in St. Louis and Shea Stadium in New York) and rehabilitating them to be sold to sports clubs, colleges and high schools, said the company's president Jim Sprinkle.

To renovate and repair the iron frames of the seats, the company first puts them in an oven to bake the paint off and then sandblasts to the bare metal. "Then the chair arms are taken completely apart then put back together, and they are painted," explained Sprinkle. "The repainting process goes through a curing oven. After that, they are ready to be installed."

The Deltas received approval from the Rec and Parks Department for the seating, and S & S Seating started installing the seats this week at Kezar Stadium. Many people in the neighborhood who use the stadium for recreation asked the workers about the project. Some expressed reservations about removing the stadium's current bleacher seats. "There are sentimental people but once they heard [the seats were] coming from Candlestick they were all overjoyed," Sprinkle said. "Everyone has come in and said this is a great thing."

After the installation is complete, 10 of the 18 seating sections at Kezar will be filled with the refurbished Candlestick seats. The other parts of the stadium will remain as bleacher seating.

A few months ago, an additional 500 Candlestick seats were also discovered in a City of San Francisco warehouse. The city called the Deltas asking if they could remove the seating to save them from being destroyed. After looking at possible solutions, the team asked S & S Seating if they could take possession of the seats. The company provided a truck for free to transport the seats to Indiana. Some of those seats were also rehabilitated and are also part of the current installation.

"Let's make sure that they have another life," Sprinkle said. "And that's what we are doing with them, giving them another life."

Helmick believes, as the current stewards for Kezar, the Deltas have to respect and honor the stadium's traditions.

The team has reached out to former 49ers who played at Kezar to learn more about its history. They hope they can incorporate what they learn in other stadium improvements, including updating the stadium's original locker rooms.

"[Kezar is] a place where national team games were played, where Jesse Owens ran track, Where Pele played," said Helmick. "There is tremendous history that's happened there that people don't know about. We believe it's our responsibility to let people know how special it is."