

A finer football field

Big plans for Harris Field

By JOSE LOPEZ
Staff Writer

Nothing to do on Friday nights?

Local football fans might have more action than they ever dreamed of if the Dade County School Board approves a \$239,000 proposal to face-lift the football field at Harris Field.

While Harris Field, located at South Dixie Highway and Campbell Drive, became the jewel of the city's parks after Hurricane Andrew, the football portion of the complex was never really rejuvenated.

However, making the football field a first class facility will become reality if the school board passes a proposal endorsed by city officials and veteran board member Holmes Braddock.

According to the proposal, \$239,000 would be spent to build large locker rooms — complete with bathrooms and showers — a larger concession stand and additional seating in the bleachers.

"This is a great chance for the community and the schools to work together," said Homestead Vice Mayor Steve Bateman, excited about the prospects of a finer high school football field in his hometown.

"It'll be great to see this project up and running."

If the board — which will hear the proposal at its Nov. 6th meet-



PHOTO BY JOSE LOPEZ

FOOTBALL FANS — Endorsing the project that would upgrade the football field at Harris Field are (L-R) architect Robert Barnes, Homestead Assistant City Manager Marcie Heese, Homestead High athletic director Kevin Justice, school board member Holmes Braddock, South Dade High athletic director Joel Furnari, Homestead council members Ruth Campbell, Steve Shiver and Steve Bateman.

ing, gives the go-ahead, construction should be completed by kickoff time in 1997.

The upgrades, designed by Homestead architect Robert Barnes, include two locker rooms, each containing 924 square feet of space, with showers and restrooms containing an additional 484 square feet. Once completed, each locker room will contain more than 1,400 square feet.

The existing bleachers on the west side of the stadium are to be elevated. The lockers will be built under the bleachers on the east side.

The improvements will do more than just make the place look better. Two additional high schools — Southridge and the new Coral Reef High — will share the

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the field with Homestead and South Dade.

"We're hoping to have 24 games played here, 12 more than the 12 games we play here now," said the school board's Braddock. "I'm really excited to get this project going."

The improvements will increase the current seating by 500

— from 3,385 to 3,885. A bigger crowd can be expected at the games next season.

"It's good to see that the community as well as the school board is really enthusiastic about this project," said Braddock. "This will be a great partnership between the schools and the city."

Bateman is pleased also. "When the idea came up, people said it wouldn't fly," he said. "But

this is a win-win situation. There's a lot of support and that's what it's going to take to make this project take off."

The two local schools — Homestead and South Dade — will benefit most from the improvements, said Braddock. "Right now they have nowhere to go during halftime. They just go to the side of the field and stand around. These schools need a new place."