

COURTESY PHOTO

Intramural sports are getting a face lift right along with Idaho sports. Pictured here are an artist's rendering of the proposed practice and intramural fields by the Kibbie Dome.

UI plans for intramural upgrades

BY TYLER ROUNDS
SPECIAL TO THE ARGONAUT

Intramural captains have voiced their desire for longer intramural seasons for flag football and soccer, and next fall they will get their wish thanks to a new sports complex to be built near the Kibbie Dome.

The \$2 million project will be complete by next fall, giving many students what they've been asking for.

"The students told us they wanted a longer season, so this is what we will give them," UI intramural sports graduate assistant Roger Wiltse said. "This complex will be in use next fall for sure."

The complex's \$2 million price tag was split — \$1 million each from the athletic department and campus recreation department. The complex will be built where the UI football team's practice field currently sits, to the east and north of the Kibbie Dome.

The complex will contain four 60-by-80-yard football/soccer fields and will be completely lighted. The plans call for two of the fields to be covered with field turf with the remaining two in natural grass.

"The lights will allow us to schedule games later in the evening and also extend the season," Wiltse said. "This was impos-

sible before due to the time it gets dark later into the semester."

The two turf fields will be used by the football team for practice daily from 3:30-6:30 p.m., but other than that the intramural and recreation department will have full control over their use.

The later game times should also allow a larger number of students to participate because of the decreased conflict with class time and early evening tests that currently exists, Wiltse said. "It just makes more sense."

In addition to the benefits for intramural use, any student group or organization will be able to reserve a field for its own purpose.

The recreation department hopes the football/soccer complex will give students something tangible that will increase support for a proposed enclosed quadplex. The department will ask the Board of Education this year for a \$7 increase in student fees for the quadplex, to be built where Guy Wicks Field is currently located.

The quadplex would provide a full-sized baseball field and three full-sized softball fields, all fully lighted and enclosed.

The total cost of the quadplex would be \$15 per student to bond and build.

"We are asking for \$7 to begin with from the board of educators

and realistically looking to get \$5," Wiltse said.

If passed, the fee increase would be the beginning of other small increases to student fees until the \$15 was finally collected or another source of revenue to build the complex came through.

"Realistically we are looking at five to six years before anyone will see this built on campus if the plan continues as scheduled," Wiltse said.

Student feelings toward the proposed project are mixed.

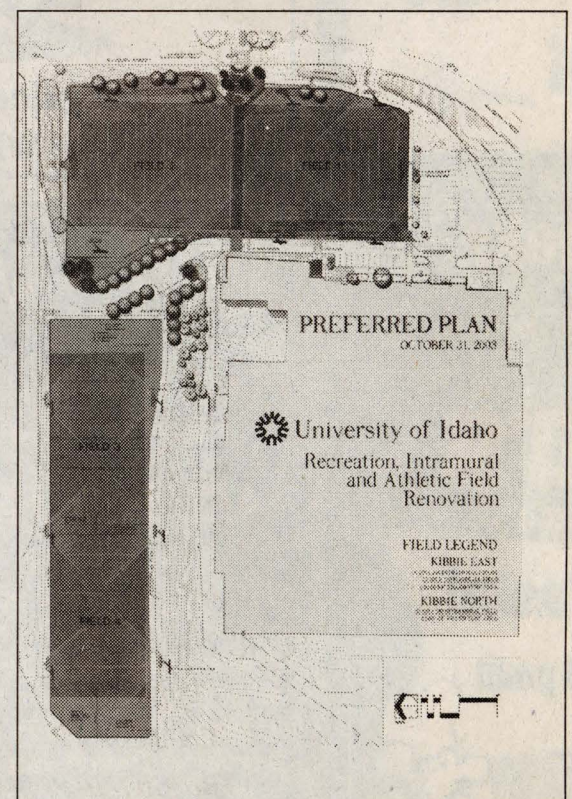
"I understand why they want to improve recreation facilities on campus, but it really would be nice if they could do it without raising student fees," said Dustin Becherer, a junior business major. "They are already too high."

John Wonderlich, sophomore business major, said he doesn't feel the proposed quadplex would be worth the fee increase.

"I won't even be here by the time it is built," Wonderlich said. "So why should I pay for it?"

Some students see the quadplex as a positive.

"It is great to see something like this (SRC) on campus and I can't wait to see what the new fields will look like," freshman political science major Chad Spencer said. "I like a reason to keep active while at school."



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The Kibbie Dome upgrades cost \$2 million. The new fields and facilities will be in place by fall 2004 and used for intramural sports and football practice.