

# CENTRE DAILY TIMES

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## Facilities Get Major Upgrades

### Millions to be spent on softball, soccer and golf infrastructure

By Lauren Boyer

Between building a new softball stadium and soccer and golf clubhouses, Penn State athletics has its game plan set for the upcoming months.

This fall, construction of a \$9.5 million softball stadium, currently in the design phase, will take place on the site of the team's current home, Nittany Lion Field, at University Drive and Park Avenue, said Marv Bevan, project manager for Penn State's Office of Physical Plant.

"Right now, it's some bleachers, that's it," Bevan said.

Already in the works, a \$2.9 million project to build two new varsity soccer fields has trucks dumping topsoil this week near Penn State baseball's former home, Beaver Field, Bevan said. The old women's soccer fields there will be converted into intramural fields.

The plan, Bevan said, is to eventually top off the project with a men's and women's soccer clubhouse south of Jeffrey Field.

"When the clubhouse is built, they can practice on those fields as opposed to walking across University Drive and Park Avenue to the current practice fields," Bevan said. And next fall, the Penn State golf team will be teeing off near its own \$2 million clubhouse adjacent to the Walker Clubhouse, Bevan said.

"What is at the Walker Clubhouse is for public use," he added. "The team has no lockers. They have no clubhouse."

Penn State is looking at whether it should upgrade other athletic facilities or build new ones. Ford Stryker, associate vice president of Penn State's Office of Physical Plant, said research is being conducted to either expand the existing Indoor Tennis Center, which is "not large enough to accommodate all the people who would like to use it," or build another.

"Unfortunately, all of the options (for the indoor tennis facility) are fairly expensive, and there are pros and cons associated with each choice," Stryker said, adding that the project would need to be funded primarily through donations.

Spearheading the For the Future capital campaign, Rodney Kirsch, senior vice president for development and alumni relations, said the campaign hopes to raise money for both indoor tennis and soccer field projects.

Paul Ruskin, Office of Physical Plant spokesman, said the university is “constantly looking for ways to improve athletic facilities and make sure there are enough for all students.” Penn State hired the firm Brailsford & Dunlavey in 2005 to conduct a recreational facility analysis to “determine whether the university is meeting the demand of students as well as remaining competitive with regional and competitive institutions,” the final report reads.

A survey in the report conducted of 676 students said about 29 percent of students surveyed said recreation sports facilities and programs should be a “very high priority” for Penn State. About 54 percent of those surveyed said that, as recreational sports improvements are considered, keeping tuition and fees affordable is “very important.”

Penn State is considering charging students a \$200 a year fee to help pay for facilities upgrades. The money would first be used to connect the HUB-Robeson Center to the White Building Fitness Center and Intramural Building expansion — a move that’s probably still about 10 years in the future, Ruskin said.

Another feasibility study, Bevan said, is researching the possibility of adding a competition pool and diving tower to McCoy Natatorium.

“All these projects are funding determined,” with the final decisions to be made by the administration and university trustees, he said.

As a result of the construction of the Biology and Materials Science Building across Pollock Road from Pollock halls, the tennis courts and roller hockey rink will be moved to a location near Bigler Fields, Stryker said. No timetable for construction of those has been established.