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PREP FOOTBALL

APS Works On Stadium Plans

Venue Would Ease Scheduling Woes

By James Staley Journal Staff Writer

Ed Drangmeister sometimes glances at the upcoming weekly high school football schedule and sighs in relief.

“Some weeks I’m lucky that we’re sending a JV team to Los Lunas, so that I have enough spots to play,” he said.

Supreme relief for Drangmeister, an APS coordinator of athletics who oversees football and stadium operations, is still a few seasons away. When? It’s difficult to say. But APS athletics director Ken Barreras said the district should have a crystallized plan for the West Side multi-purpose complex by December.

“We’re in the design and schematic state of it,” Barreras said.

In the coming months Barreras expects to generate answers for the following key questions:

What does the project entail?

What is it going to cost?

How will the district pay for it?

What’s the timeline?

Besides knowing it will be on the West Side, preferably near I-40 and Nine Mile Hill, officials are planning a more upscale venue than what the district has with Milne (built in 1939) and Wilson (1963) stadiums.

“We have grander plans from a design standpoint,” Barreras said. “It will be not only another place to play football and have track, but maybe a venue where the school district could host graduation ceremonies.”

Once the design is clearer, APS should know the exact cost. Once that is determined, the project’s timeline should settle into place.

Then Drangmeister’s scheduling issues won’t be as difficult.

Until the new complex is complete, APS will continue to play football games six days per week. During one randomly selected week in September there are 18 games scheduled — eight each at Milne and Wilson and two freshman-level games at smaller Milne 2.

TURF UPDATE: During the next bond cycle, APS plans to raise money to replace the artificial turf at Milne and Wilson stadiums, Barreras said.

"It's worn," he said. "It has had patching and seam work done. It's weather-beaten. It's still good to play on, but the warranty lasts eight years."

This football season will be the eighth played on the surfaces, a blend of plastic and rubber known as AstroPlay that was installed in 2001. At the time APS paid \$1.2 million to replace the football and track surfaces at each stadium.

The next turf will be the third artificial surface to blanket Milne and Wilson since 1981.

Including all APS members, 15 of 22 football teams in Class 5A will play home games on an artificial surface. Clovis is the latest school to switch from natural grass, but that conversion is ongoing. All five teams in District 3-5A still play on grass.