



With Fort Lauderdale's Blessing, Beckham Group Ready To Bring Lockhart Stadium Back To Its Glory Days

By Joan Murray

March 20, 2019

FORT LAUDERDALE (CBSMiami) – Earlier this week the City of Fort Lauderdale greet-lit David Beckham and his Mgroup's proposal to turn abandoned Lockhart Stadium into a soccer stadium



and training facility. Now some are wondering how this will impact Inter Miami FC's planned stadium in Miami, while others are pleased that the Broward County stadium site will be revitalized for a new generation of soccer fans.

“When I stepped on that pitch, I fell in love with Lockhart,” said former Fort Lauderdale Strikers player Thomas Rongen.

Rongen remembered the glory days, when he played for the Strikers back in the 1990’s.

Now he’s excited about Lockhart’s expected return to life with Fort Lauderdale’s approval to transform the decayed stadium into a new venue, a training facility and a place for youngsters to play and grow with the team.

“The place was 20,000 seats,” said Rongen. “We connected with the fans. They connected with us. So I’m glad they’ll do something special with this.”

The deal is a game changer for Fort Lauderdale, says economic development expert John Boyd. “This really underscores the brand of Fort Lauderdale, and there is no bigger international brand than the Beckham brand,” said Boyd.

But some wonder how this will impact Beckham’s planned permanent stadium in Miami, on the city owned Melreese Golf Course. Miami FC investor Jorge Mas tweeted about the Lockhart deal and why it didn’t happen in Miami.

It could have been in Miami but ZERO ability to build world class complex. Their hands are tied by antiquated laws. Our parks are cow pastures and kids have to go to Orlando to play tourneys.

Miami-Dade Mayor Carlos Gimenez didn’t see a problem with the decision. “It’s two separate deals,” said Gimenez. “They have to play somewhere, it’s a win for both cities.”

But Rongen says no need to worry.

“There’s no way in my mind the Mas brothers would give up Miami,” he said. “It’s a win-win for both cities.”