

MIAMI BEACH

Ivy league rowing teams have city buzzing

The Miami Beach Watersports Complex in North Beach has grown into a winter attraction for Northeast college rowing programs.

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It was in the neighborhood of 30 degrees in Cambridge, Mass., Wednesday morning as Harvard University's rowing crew neared the end of practice.

So as they sliced through the water toward the shore, the college students were no doubt happy to be rowing not toward Harvard's frigid Newell Boat-house, but to the Ronald W. Shane Center at 6500 Indian Creek Dr.

Like other universities from the Northeast, Harvard's rowing teams have found North Beach and the home of the Miami Beach Rowing Club Ronald W. Shane Center an attractive locale for training during the winter.

The women's team visited the facility once about 10 years ago, but Harvard's nine-day visit is its first for the men's team, coach Harry Parker said.

"It's a very impressive facility," Parker said.

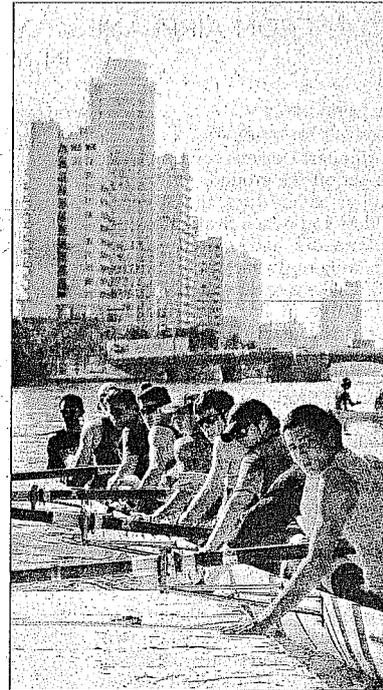
Comments like Parker's and the presence of Harvard — the largest program among the country's universities, according to Parker, and one of the most competitive — has center proponents gushing.

On Wednesday, City Commissioner Jerry Libbin proclaimed the day "Harry Parker Day" in the city, welcoming the coach and former Olympian, and declaring the Harvard program's presence a benchmark moment for the center.

"Since the beginning it's been such a thrill to see this program build," Libbin said.

Local programs with the University of Miami and Barry University already practice at the facility.

But there is hope that Har-



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Harvard's decision to come to Miami — where Harvard trained last year — Atlanta, or other south-

WINTER TRAINING: Harvard's rowing teams are using the Ronald W. Shane Center on North Beach for winter practice. Above left, women's team members Christine Baugh, left, and Jennie Peterson, store their oars after morning practice on Wednesday. Above, the men's team ends morning practice. Left, Miami Beach commissioner Jerry Libbin, left, presents a copy of his proclamation naming the day after Harry Parker, the coach of the men's varsity team, on Wednesday at the center.

eastern facilities will resonate with other large programs.

Consider that, according to Elaine Roden, executive director of the center, the average university brings 40 to 60 people to North Beach.

That includes Duke, Rutgers, the University of Connecticut and the University at Buffalo, among others.

Harvard alone brought 191 to North Beach.

Couple Harvard's presence

with the inclusion of a second floor meeting space several years ago, and there is hope that the facility is gaining recognition among programs looking to train in the southeast, Roden said.

"Having them here this week is terrific for the center, to have a program with that level of recognition," Roden said.

"Harvard could probably go anywhere," she said.

"But they chose to come here."