Participation, Competition, Keynote M.I.T. Athletics

by Jack Trigheim '56

The many contributions made to science and industry by the Institute and its traditionally high academic standards have all been obscured by its part as pioneer in intercollegiate athletics. You may have heard of the scientific achievements and academic traditions but it is extremely unlikely that you know that MIT introduced intercollegiate sailing competition or was one of the first through little known sport of weightlifting.

Because of the lack of big-time Tech major sport teams, the athletic program has received little notice, however, one of the most complete is be found in any university, large or small. Every program includes every sport, major or minor, with the exception of football. Participation in varsity, freshman and j.v. athletics is perhaps the most complete anywhere. Almost one-third of the undergraduate body has at one time or another participated in the intercollegiate program.

No "Minor" Sports

Before I mentioned major and minor sports, let me correct myself. At the Institute there are no minor sports, all sports are treated equally. This is perhaps the essence of the MIT attitude.

We like to win, but we are not just to "participate" but to win if possible. Just as there are no minor sports, there are no minor victories. A win by the lightweight crew over a comparatively minor league opponent rates just as high as a win by the crew over a definitely big-league adversary.

But it is obviously impossible for a college like Tech to compete in the so-called big-time in every sport without granting special privileges to athletes and recruiting prospects. This is not the way the Institute does things. We, therefore, compete with schools in our own class. Since the caliber of our teams varies with each sport, the caliber of our opponents varies greatly. This policy is perhaps the best possible one. If it is generally in use the present situation of drastic overemphasis in intercollegiate sport would be virtually nonexistent. MIT has found the answer to overemphasis not in complete deemphasis but in proper emphasis.

Tech Championship

The success of this program may be easily seen. Last year's Tech varsity took home such prizes as the Thames Cup of the Henley Regatta, the national intercollegiate sailing crown, the lightweight hockey title, and the national indoor track title — Warren Lott in 44.6's hurdles win — and Bill Anderton '56 in the half jump. The basketball team captured the NEISA indoor track title and the Lightweight Hockey title. The squash team, to name two, do not require a great deal of previous experience. In almost all sports at the varsity level there is no "cut" made. The athletic facilities are excellent and are being constantly improved, Witness the new hockey rink and basketball floor. Despite the high percentages of intercollegiate participants, there is room for a great many more. All sports are open to anyone. Your participation in intercollegiate athletics. Although you may never have gone out for a sport before, you need not limit to a sport. A surprising small number of Tech varsity athletes had high school experience. Why not give it a try? The fall and fall sports program offer an excellent opportunity to start out.

Engineer Sailors To Defend Trophy Against Oxford U.

On September 18th and 19th, The Engineer sailors will defend the Sir Thomas Lipton Trophy again strong Oxford University, England, first foreign challenge in the intercollegiate sailing championships at Newport Harbor, California. Last June and carried away the Henry Adams Mores Trophy awarded jointly to the top sailing team in the nation. The victory was M.I.T.'s ninth in the nineteen years of the race. Harvard was a close second in the double round robin match.

Following their victory in the championships, the Engineers joined the Crimsons in successfully defending the Lipton Cup against the crews of Washington and UCLA. This win gave the New England Sailing Association the opportunity to defend the trophy against any of the nations of the Oxford squad, and as Engage sailors by their win earned the right to represent the MIT sailing team in the Henry Adams Mores Trophy, one of the many honors bearing the name of the late great English Sportsman.