Eighty Years of Colorful History

Field Day: From the Cane Rush to the Totem Pole Race

For over eighty years, MIT has had Day set aside in the Fall as the occasion of rivalry between the Junior and Sophomore classes, ever since the first time that this outdoor event failed to take place. This year, however, the Class of 1962 arrived for a yet uncontested honor Field Day victory with their rivals, in drench and spirited style of 1882. As a result, elaborate preparations had been made for this classic, which will take place this Saturday afternoon.

The Cane Rush

Two years before the turn of the last century, Field Day as we will see it this year was completely unknown. Instead, intramural rivalry was then climaxcd with a hard-hitting event called the Cane Rush. During the Cane Rush, the dash to get the most hands securely planted on a particular cane, originally given to the Fresh, won the event. Usually, the Cane Rush did not conclude with the shot fired to announce the finish; in fact, the shot added to the noise and spirit of the scrapping. In 1900, the Cane Rush ended in tragedy when one freshman was fatally injured, and another mauled, beneath a pile of over-enthusiastic classmates and rivals.

In the following year, President Henry Smith Pritchett initiated a series of organized activities that would tend to be safer, yet still manage good fun and competition. In this first of the modern Field Days, the Freshmen were the football and relay races, while the Sophomores carried the rest of the day. A weather trend was also started on this Field Day: pouring rain and a muddy field.

As years passed, Field Day grew to be very broad in scope. Until 1952, "Tech Nine" had been an integral part of the post-Field Day activities, with its all-night prank, parade, fun-making feats, and general rioting. The people of Boston regarded Tech Nine with apprehension. The newspapers in distant cities often carried such lurid stories of the celebration that an outsider might well have thought that the liberal destruction of Boston was at hand.

Globe Field and Meg Lati

For the most part, Field Day in some form continued with the Institute until last year. Among the more outstanding Field Days, that of 1927 was one that will long be remembered. That year, the Glove Fight, which is a general melee involving as many members as possible of both classes, was begun. In 1938 it was unanimously agreed by all concerned that throwing what was termed by one reporter "sand bags and dyring saustage" would no longer be indulged in. Mayots played a big role. Among those who innocent devours, symbolic scavengers, and keen judges, the Sophomores had a pre-Field Day ritual called the rug fight, which was disrupted not too many years ago by the efforts of a freshman chemical engineer armed with tear gas surreptitiously produced during chemistry lab projects.

One last year, MIT almost lost Field Day forever. In a decision in April, 1961, the Athletic Association decided to "shut it down", a claim being made that Field Day interfered with varsity sports. Many had hoped that the following year would bring a change of heart in A.A., but their hopes were disappointed. So when full course was given in the last year, the students of East Campus and Senior House took matters into their own hands, and organized the "East Campus Field Day." This competition, sponsored by the publications "Micidy Mouse Club", was arranged about the basis of its predecessor, but naturally involved only a small portion of the campus. In this fact that after a very similar scheme of "Field Day" failed to attract much rivalry, some unidentified persons stole the shift out of the eye, which had been accidentally dropped; that shaft has never been seen again.

The Institute community was extremely pleased when last Spring, Institute Committee brought Field Day back to campus. Besides the usual honor society activities, the fresh and sophomores planned a three-month tour of the area. In spite of the usual lull in the spring, the Freshman classes were stages rivals, consisting of about one-third of the members. In this sense, the Sophomores were considered "the most" and the Freshmen "the least" of the two classes.

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MIT Clubs stand on the sidelines glistening waiting the Field Day proceedings, which seem to0m some of the more liver-hearted members of the Institute family, such as the fifth person from the right.

Field Day, the freshmen invoke a long tradition by encircling the winners. In spite of the usual lull in the spring, the Freshman classes were stages rivals, consisting of about one-third of the members. In this sense, the Sophomores were considered "the most" and the Freshmen "the least" of the two classes.

OFP 1961

After a short conference, however, the sophomores decided that next year was going to be an all-out, slipshod relationship, and inefficient organization and foolish activity, what the project needed most was aesthetic appeal. On the spot and the decorative committee was formed and the members began to toil feverishly designing the drapes in various shapes of pasta colonies.

Finishing their task, the sophomores departed with the idea that comes only from helping others. Encouraged by the help received, the freshmen class was more confident than ever, and Chairman Born predicts that the fresh will "beat the pants off the Sophomores." Meanwhile, the freshman council is reportedly taking bets at two-to-one that "Old Invaders"' dynasty will prove to be greater than that of the Charles River.

As the thousands cheer, freshmen and sophomores strain grimly for inches in the tug of war.

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"Chincs" (Continued from page 1)