Heavies' Holland has tough job

By Brad Billetteaux

Pete Holland is Head Coach of Rowing at the Institute. Through the mirrored shades in his office in a corner of the Pierce Boathouse, Pete can look out at an excellent view of the Charles River. Pete knows his is the toughest crew coaching job on that river.

As coach of the MIT varsity heavyweights, Holland's crews have head-on clashes with perennial rowing powers such as Harvard and Northeastern. MIT hasn't done too well against these schools the past few years, and in a position like this you have to be realistic.

"We have a chance to win three races - realistically," Holland says. If they do, his varsity will be the best heavyweight crew that has ever rowed out of the Pierce Boathouse in its six years of existence.

The engineers' first run at the Ivy will be in their season opener tomorrow at Columbia. They edged the Lions by 1.5 seconds last year on the Charles. MIT's other possible wins are for the Cochrane Cup (Wisconsin, Dartmouth) and the Packard Cup (Syracuse, Dartmouth), both later in the season.

Holland believes this year's squad is potentially faster than last year's one-eights winner. Their physical condition is better, mostly due to the Florida trip. Of the eight men who went on the trip south, six are in the varsity. Two lettermen from last year didn't make the first boat because of conditioning.

Last Saturday's pre-season win over Trinity showed that the varsity is developing, but slowly. Inboard rowing was good, but bladework and settling to racing stroke were poor. This is part of Holland's strategy of having his crew come along slowly, building through the season and peaking for the championships, instead of peaking very early and then fading for the big races, so characteristic of Northeastern crews. In fact, MI rowed a 6:15.3 minute race Saturday (before MIT turned in a 6:33) and they aren't likely to improve too much on that time.

Coaching at MIT doesn't imply that all Holland has to work with is second-class oarsmen. Bob Rance '71 - from last year's varsity is now stroke of the Union Boat Club's eight, which garnered the national championship over the summer. Rance will be a candidate for the US National Team's eight or four-oared entry at the upcoming Munich Olympics.

Holland explained that it is refreshing to coach a school which supports athletics in a big way solely so that people can play. He would like to see more athletes admitted to MIT (without lowering standards, of course), but then he's prejudiced, being a coach. As to the recruiting game, he's had one experience worth relating. He has a letter from a New Jersey high school rowing coach which outlines the rowing experience of his men along with their college board scores. Some of the guy's scores didn't even add up to 700! The search for an oarsman-scholar is not an easy one, should MIT even want to begin it.

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