**BENCHWARMER**

By Richard J. Sternberg

While it seems that there is no escaping the yearly debates and confrontations over the MIT Intermal Handbook, I am hoping the publically generated over this year's discussions will allow us to put aside this question for a few years and consider instead the direction of the Program, which will take in the future. There are many important long-range questions facing the athletes at MIT — funding, use of facilities, effect of new construction on the program — that should be considered now, before the problems reach a head. Unfortunately, the current and seemingly permanent question is that of eligibility.

... and that of the open eligibility question, I find that many people have made some of the same reasons for denying the current restrictions and possibly expanding on them. There is no denying that most of the eligibility restrictions for non-competitive sports originally were designed to prevent competition among the members of the teams, but it is important to consider whether this would have any effect on the number of intramural teams in popular sports by reducing the eligibility requirements. Many of our best athletes have reached the point where they are cutting down on the number of contests per season in order to allow the registered number of team members. Increases in the number of team sports played by possibly 20-30 more players in each sport would decrease the overall number of time for everyone. Again, it seems that the more collegiate athlete has his sport to fall back on; the IM's eligibility was not tested.

It has been my feeling, since I first became a member of the IM Council, that our group should especially look out for the interest of people who are not very good in the sports we sponsor and encourage them by showing that athletic programs is not a prerequisite for competition. It is further evidenced by the fact that over 50% of all intramural competition at the "C" or lower levels, I feel that intramural athletics at MIT must maintain its commitment to the non-athlete, and by increasing his playing time, even in a small way, already has a great deal of facility time, and in many cases a great deal of coaching and free use of equipment, from gaining even greater athletic opportunities at the expense of people who otherwise have little or no other athletic outlet — the people without either the talent or time to compete intercollegiately.

It is also well known that in IM's, overall athletic ability and mental physical shape is the difference between two players, as opposed to having individual game's skills; i.e., the reason for the intercollegiate coaches on their athletes, I feel that he and many other people have made some of the same reasons for denying the current restrictions and possibly expanding on them. There is no denying that most of the eligibility restrictions for non-competitive sports originally were designed to prevent competition among the members of the teams, but it is important to consider whether this would have any effect on the number of intramural teams in popular sports by reducing the eligibility requirements. Many of our best athletes have reached the point where they are cutting down on the number of contests per season in order to allow the registered number of team members. Increases in the number of team sports played by possibly 20-30 more players in each sport would decrease the overall number of time for everyone. Again, it seems that the more collegiate athlete has his sport to fall back on; the IM's eligibility was not tested.

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