Gymnastics fifth in NEs

By Paul J. Bayer

The MIT men's gymnastics team finished its season last Sunday with a fifth place finish at the New England Championships. The score of 142.55 was one of the highest of the season and averaged an earlier dual meet loss to Boston State which finished behind the Engineers in this meet.

Andy Rubel '74 captured fourth on the parallel bars as teammate, Jon Johnson '76 placed eighth in the same event. In the all-around competition, David Lu '77 took ninth. MIT gymnasts would have earned better results were it not for the surprise presence of Springfield College, which dominated the meet, taking first by twenty points.

Rubel's fourth on parallel bars was clearly the outstanding performance of the day for the Engineers. His 8.2 score in the preliminaries placed him fifth. In the finals, he scored 8.45, his highest score for the season, and in what is always the most difficult meet in which to prove his standing in the finals. For the most part, Rubel's routine was shorter and slightly less difficult than his predecessors, but his distinctively strong, light style gave him an advantage over the heavier, more powerful style of the others. Particularly notable was his straight body back flip dismount with perfect form. It should also be noted that all three people who beat him were from Springfield.

Johnson on rings suffered even more from Springfield's resilience. All five Indian ring competitors made the finals and beat him. Johnson's prelim routine showed a few rough spots including weak handstands. However, he was able to correct most of his problems in the finals and achieved his best set of the season. Unfortunately, he was not able to hit his double back-dismount and did not improve his standing in the finals.

As a team, MIT put together a score just short of average for the season, in what is always the most difficult meet in which to perform well. Every event was within 0.3 of average except the parallel bar team which hit 3.1 above. Behind Rubel there were Curt Thim '75 with 7.35, David Lu with 6.65, and Alan Razak '75 with 6.6. The other top scorers were Lu on floor exercise and vaulting, Wu Taylor '76 on pommet horse, and Scott Foster '75 on high bar.

The fifth place finish was a strong showing as the MIT gymnasts were only six points behind fourth place Dartmouth. However, losing five of this year's top seven scores to graduation means that next year will once again be a rebuilding year.

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