No playoffs, few referees: how not to run IM soccer

To the Editor:

It is a well-known fact that MIT's extensive Intramural Program is here for the benefit and participation of the entire MIT Community. While this "universal" participation differs somewhat from that of many American sports (including professional), the many levels of sport usually share two important things in common:

1) How their human excellence in athletic competition and the "team" experience, and
2) the anticipation of postseason play for those teams fortunate enough to qualify.

In my four years of IM play, I have found that many sports have been adequately managed and have included playoffs (A/B Leagues, Intramurals, etc.). While last year's IM Soccer program is what I must take exception to. Last year for instance, although there was only room enough for a four-game schedule, a very adequate playoff structure for at least A and B leagues was arranged. Everybody was happy.

This year, it seems to me that the program is (was) very shoddy. If a person assumes the important position of managing an IM program, a complete, and not a half-ass job is needed. It is a service to the whole community being done, and therefore should not be taken lightly. Here are some examples of what I mean:

1) Although there are two teams from my fraternity (thus making the chance of being overlooked), we did not receive a copy of this season's schedule — a minor inconvenience.

2) The schedules posted in duPont were gone after two weeks — a major inconvenience.

3) The rain-out games of Saturday, September 9 were not rescheduled (although properly postponed)

4) The refereeing was highly variable.

While most did a commendable job, there is one glaringly bad example that must be mentioned. During the second half of what my team considered to be an important game in the standings, the IM Soccer manager was our lone official. During that time, he stayed mostly at one far end of the field, observing much of the game from a very impractical distance. While I admit it is hard to be the one ref, his total lack of effort to even be in the center of the field influenced the outcome of the game. A very poor example to others, indeed!

Finally, there is the fact that only A-League playoffs are being scheduled. For myself and many other disappointed B-Leaguers, I cannot possibly understand why B-League (and possibly C as well) playoffs have not been scheduled, unless it was pure laziness on the part of those involved.

Certainly, it could not be for lack of space, because A-League playoffs couldn't possibly take up more than half of a playing day. It was more a problem, braving the cold and wind of Oct. 11 could be much worse than anything else. If money for refs was lacking, I'm sure each team involved would have been glad to come up with a ref for the opportunity to play. Lastly, it couldn't have been for a lack of enthusiasm, for my team (I'm sure others as well?) played their hearts out in the last game in order to gain a possible position in the playoffs that we all assumed would occur.

I don't want this letter to sound like sour grapes, because I would have been very upset at the whole situation even if my team was out of contention. I just hope that the IM Council takes note of this letter and takes proper action to improve the program.

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Jeffrey A. Sturr '77
A B-League Soccer Captain