Cross country gets bid for Division III Nationals

By Dave Dobos
Tonight, the MIT cross country team will realize its season-long goal: the Engineers will compete in the NCAA Division III National Championships in Worcester hosted by Case Western Reserve.

The MIT athletes are making the trip by virtue of the October 25 invitation letter from Billy Squires, cross country coach at Boston State and chairman of the New England Division III selection committee. MIT was one of only six teams chosen from scores of New England area small colleges. The others include Lowell, Brandeis, Southern New Hampshire, Bates, and Keene State.

Why was MIT picked? A 7-1-1 dual meet record, a fourth place finish in the Coastline Bowl two weeks ago, and consistently outstanding and improving performances throughout the season all combined to earn the Engineers the bid. Squires, in his letter, expressed the selection committee's confidence that MIT could well compete in the New England area.

Engineer coach Pete Close couldn't agree more. Close, who, in compiling a 30-13 career record, has led MIT into a New England powerhouse in just four years of coaching, believes that his athletes will "do something credit" in tomorrow's race. He talks of a possible top ten finish for MIT, if everyone runs to his capability. This would be a significant jump from 18th place in last year's championship.

Close calls this week's contest the highlight of his coaching career. "It's the pinnacle of success to be chosen by your peers," observed the coach, who is a former Olympian himself. He also feels that tomorrow's winners will be an excellent exposure of MIT and its athletic program to the sports public in general and to potential high school applicants as well.

The seven athletes who will represent MIT are senior captain All-American Frank Richardson, seniors John Krolowski and Steve Keith, Chris Svensgaard '78, Barry Boys '79, and freshmen Lee Nieser and Dave Westenberg. These seven constitute MIT's fastest cross country team in the school's history. All of them have broken 26:00 this season on Franklin Park's 5.0-mile course.

Richardson, who placed fifth in last year's national competition, is hoping to improve that finish in 1976. However, the task will be difficult as the top five from '75 (Brian's Villas Fleming, Octobert's Joel Jameson, Case's Peter Krummert, North Central's Bruce Fischer, and, of course, Richardson) are all returning. Added to that group is Lowell's Bob Hodge, who has run the fastest small college times in New England this fall. Close feels that Richardson is "going to be in there" with the top finishers. Close further states that Richardson is vastly improved from last year. The senior athlete has consistently run times 20 to 30 seconds faster than he ran at his peak last year. His 26:04 at Franklin Park in the Greater Boston Fall Classic this season is an MIT record. MIT Athletic Director Ross Smith, in commenting about Richardson, said that he would undoubtedly be number one in the country in most years.

Smith went on to call the 1976 squad "one of the finest teams in the history of the sport" for MIT. Certainly, the top seven runners benefited from the great interest in the sport at MIT. The 30 men and women out for cross country this fall provided for excellent intra-team competition.

It's a great thing that Richardson, in his senior year, will compete with his team rather than alone at such a high-caliber event. He and Svensgaard, who has developed into a Class A runner himself, will lead this quality squad that few expected would make it to the championship meet of America's finest teams.

Volleyball invited to Easterns

By Glenn Brownstein
MIT's volleyball team has realized its dream. The squad, which completed a perfect 18-0 regular-season mark Tuesday night with a victory over Springfield, was invited on Thursday afternoon to compete in the Eastern regional of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (small college) state championships.

The Engineers find themselves in competition with at least six other teams from scores of New England area small colleges. The others include Lowell, Brandeis, Southern New Hampshire, Bates, and Keene State.

Monday, November 15 is the first day of practice for the men's and women's swimming teams. Practice for women will be from 3 to 5pm; men's practice will be from 5 to 7pm.

There will be an IC Council meeting on Sunday, Nov 14 at 7pm in the Harvard Club Lounge. Elections will be held for members of the MIT men's and women's swimming, softball, squash, swimming, table tennis, and water polo teams.

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