MIT Sports: A banner year

By Tom Curtis

MIT sports teams had a banner year in 1976-77, amassing a 135-164-2 overall record. Many teams captured regional titles while others had their first winning season in many years.

The most outstanding team was the women’s volleyball squad which, in its first year as a varsity sport, was undefeated in 18 regular season matches. Then the team swept through the Massachusetts Division III State Championships for the second year in a row. The climax of the season came late in November when the team captured the Eastern regional title, thereby receiving a bid to the Small Colleges National Championships in Malibu, California.

MIT’s running teams also amassed excellent records this year. Led by senior Frank Richardson, numerous record-holding performances, the cross-country, indoor track, and outdoor track teams compiled an overall record of 16-3.

Beaten only by Lowell University, cross-country had a 7-1 record, its best since 1968. They did well in many tournaments this year, taking fourth in the Greater Boston Championships and the Edith Bowl, eleventh in the New England Championships, 20th in the ICAA’s and 21st in the Division III National Championships. In the ICAA’s in November, Richardson became the first MIT runner to take top honors.

The indoor track team also wound up one meet short of an undefeated season, losing only to Bowdoin in the last but last meet of the season. Richardson and Reed von Bonin ’78 both shattered school records this year. Von Bonin broke the MIT high jump mark three times, eventually posting the record at 7'1". In post-season competition, Richardson set new marks in the two-mile and three-mile runs. In the Easterns, he snatched the nine-year-old, MIT two-mile record with a time of 8:54.4, and in the ICAA’s, he became the first Tech runner to go three miles in under 14:00. His 13:48.96 clocking was good for a sixth place finish in the race.

The outdoor track team compiled its season with a 3-1 record. Again, Richardson was the key man, setting an outdoor three-mile record (13:43.0) to accomplish his indoor mark.

Perhaps MIT’s most competitive team on the national level was men’s fencing. After a 10-3 regular season, the fencers went on to win their eighth straight New England title and place sixth and therefore All-American in the NCAA Championships at Notre Dame. The most outstanding individual performance was junior Mark Smith’s first-place finish in the Eastern Foil Championships. Going undefeated in the finals, Smith led MIT as the second in the team competition.

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The team finished fifth in the New England Championships and sent its captain Judy Austin ’77 to the National Championships.

The ever-strong MIT pistol team took first in the New England sectional after a 6-3 season. Led by captain Dave Scheller ’78, the team set a National Junior Air Pistol team record early in the season.

The men’s swimming team also captured the national level, finishing eleventh in the New England Championships and sending six swimmers to the Division III National Championships. Captain Vorlicek ’79, Rick Ehrlin ‘77, and Bob Hone ’79 earned All-American honors. Ehrlin and Hone finished tenth and eleventh respectively in diving. Vorlicek took eighth in the 200-yard breaststroke. Vorlicek and freshmen John Dieken set numerous school records to pace the team to a 7-4 record.

MIT sailing teams also earned several distinctions. The men placed second in the New England Fall Championships and took first in the Greater Boston Dinghy Championships this spring. The women won three regattas in the fall.

Several teams had their best seasons in many years. Hockey had an 11-7-4 record for its first winning year since the early 60’s. While lacrosse’s 8-4 was the team’s best mark in the last 60’s. The women’s gymnastics team, in its second season, posted an improved record. Skiing won (Please turn to page 15).

MIT Sports? You bet

By Gordon Haff

A person wanders onto the MIT campus and is immediately ensnared in a0 certainty, glass, and metal maze. He is swallowed up, perhaps awed by the reputation of the place, the knowledge of the discoveries which have taken place in these buildings. If he approaches through the Great Court, he meets with the easterisms of great scientists of the past indubitably entombed into the concrete of the walls which surround him. In this state of mind, athletics and sports seem out of place, somehow inappropriate.

If this person’s beginning view of the campus is during the summer months, he might well first encounter the sports program in the sound of tennis balls being swatted back and forth. Or he may find it by walking across Briggs Field where countless softball and football games are in progress and froheads float through the warm, humid air. On the Kresge Oval he may...