Soceer

After Jamie Bernard '79 started moving just before half-time, MT's soccer performance improved, primarily because of the weight of the team members (average weight 170 pounds). Football at that time was brutal. Because of the lack of protective gear, injuries were far more common than they are today. About a dozen deaths occurred each year because of injuries. The situation was so bad that some people asked President Theodore Roosevelt to outlaw the sport. At MIT, the brutality of football was evident at every yard the quality of the team diminished towards the end of the season because of injuries.

Even with the devastating effect of injuries, MIT did stage a comeback in 1997, competing a 5-2-1 record for its best season in eleven years. The team also had a winning season in 1900 and appeared to be competitive the next year also when President Henry Pritchett called a student meeting to discuss the status of football at MIT.

Pritchett argued against football on the grounds that the sport took too much of the participants time. Other arguments against the sport were that the high admission fees instated, but it was suggested that it be lowered to 25 cents, home games scheduled during the week instead of on Saturday, and, of course, the high number of injuries.

After considering the matter, the student body voted to disband the team, 1901-1917. The MIT soccer team played its last game on October 9, 1901, losing to Holy Cross, 1-0. Thus, MIT became one of the first, if not the first, schools to abolish varsity football.

Shortly after the vote, an editorial in The Boston Transcript stated, "As a matter of fact, a number of intercollegiate football or other athletics appear necessary to attract students, but it is not necessary, at Tech. It has not made or can make a record in this respect that it can use as a magnet, but the constantly increasing number of students, and its wider recognition all over the country shows that it does not need it.

It is evident that even in 1901, MIT had developed a unique attitude toward athletics. Sports are designed for the benefit of students, health, sports teams are not designed specifically to attract athletes.

Soccer splits a pair

By Bob Host

Combining a potent offense with reliable defense, the soccer team tied for first place last Saturday, September 29, following a 4-0 loss three days earlier at the hands of Wesleyan Polytechnic Institute.

The team came out early and moved the ball well on Saturday. WPI Engineers were ineffective for much of the first half, and only started to look good before halftime, after Jamie Bernard '79 came in as a substitute. When the score went up 4-0, Bernard took the field and WPI scored for the rest of the game, but the damage had been done.

According to Coach Walter Alessi, the front line was not moving, and the wings had to be ready. The scoring might have been a factor, but "those excuses end in the second half." WPI was untouchable, however, as they played defense and got the ball out of the starting position of the second half, despite good defense by Suk Chang '80 and one-on-one pressure early, could not advance much past opportunities, and in the game were scoreless at the half. Alessi told the team at half-time that although MIT had "pretty good communication" and "applied good coverage," they had to get the "jitters off.

Taking the coach's advice, Okine and Flori put the ball in the net in the second half and Bernard kept Trinity at bay. Bill Uhle '81, who assisted on Okine's goal, had a few scoring opportunities of his own and appears to have a bright future on the soccer field.

The big difference between the games was the "physical, mental, and emotional" factors. Sometimes mental and emotional are missing, he said, but the team put all three together Saturday. "We played the way we're capable of," he added, and "if the team continues to do so, a good season is in the offing.

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