Last year was a good one for MIT sports

By Gordon Hafl

During the past year, sports at MIT has seen a number of changes, both major and minor. Last April, the Varsity Boating team became the first track meet to be held in the new Harry G. Steinbrenner Stadium, an outdoor track and field complex which sports the first artificial surface of its kind in the country. Planning continues on the indoor sports complex. Construction was originally slated to be started over this winter (thus closing down the old outdoor rink) but now it looks like construction may not start until spring.

These new facilities are welcome additions to the MIT athletic plant, which was highly regarded when first built but which is now beginning to show both its age and its inability to keep up with an MIT community which is becoming more involved with sports on all levels every year.

In addition to its new facility, changes have come over the MIT sports program which reflect changing trends in the country as a whole. In particular, the women's sports program, which is becoming more involved with sports on all levels every year, has seen a number of changes, both major and minor.

Elsewhere in women's sports, the sailing team won the Captain's Cup, the track team came in fourth in the Head of the Charles Regatta behind the University of Wisconsin, the Vespers Boat Club, and St. Catherines, ending up second in New England. Also, freshwomen Leslie Harris became MIT's first All-American gymnast with her fifth-place finish on the uneven parallel bars at the Small College Nationals.

There were also several new additions to the program. The women's field hockey club was given Varsity status, and despite their poor record their coach expects significant improvement next year as the team gains experience.

The recently formed women's rugby club won their first game and the new women's water polo club had a winning record.

In men's Varsity sports, the biggest surprise was the water polo team. After bringing in lowing records since the early '70's the team jumped top third in New England this year. Since only two of the starters, captain Dick Henne '79 and Sam Senne '78, are being lost to graduation, the bulk of the team, including All-American goalie Pete Griffith '79, will be returning. With the additional year's experience the team should equal or surpass their performance of this past year.

In terms of awards won, however, MIT's most impressive team was water polo. By the end of the season, the squad had captured two National Junior Records in Monthly Open Free Pistol and Standard Pistol. On an individual level, Dave Miller '79 brought back a gold medal from the Pan American games where he aided the American Junior Team with a score of 362 out of 400, and David Schaller '78 set an individual record in center fire event. Pistol was not the only sport with individual champions. Mark Smith '78 of the fencing team took sixth place in the NCAA Division II swimming championships and became MIT's first All-American fencer since 1974, while leading the team to a tie with Dartmouth for the New England championship. It was the ninth year in a row they had been first or tied for first. The swim team's Preston Vorlicek also took a sixth place in the NCAA Division II swimming championships in the 200 yard breast stroke.

The rifle team finished second.

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