SPORTS

Soccer improvement likely

By Jay Glass

"This year looks very difficult to predict," missed varsity soccer coach Walter Alessi, "but we've improved every year I've been here."

Prospects for the upcoming season appear promising for the soccer team, who return all but one of last year's starters from a team that finished with a 7-6-1 record in 1977, the first winning season since 1963. However, the lone gap will be a big one to fill as stellar goalie Jimmy Bernard is ineligible to compete this season, due to the NCAA's five-year eligibility limit. Bernard, a former transfer student, was out of school two years before coming to MIT. Under the rules this will be his sixth year, making him ineligible. Senior Tom Smith, the starter last season, will handle goalkeeping this year.

As of this writing, the starting line-up will include fullbacks Tom Theriault '79, Paul Thompson '79, and Robert Sullivan '79; midfielders Michael Rafael '79, Robert Currier '79, and Luis Boza '79; and forwards William Uhle '81, Jay Walsh '81, and Zanda Ilori '79.

Last year's team was noted for its defensive strength, giving up only 14 goals in 13 games to offset a lackluster offense. When asked about this year's game strategy, Alessi replied that the defense would again be the strongest part of the team, and defensive performance would probably be the key to a successful season. He also said that the offense has been "playing much, much better" during preseason, but that once in scoring position, "the problem is putting the ball in the goal."

The speed of the front line looks to be improved with the additions from the JV team of quick seniors Uhle ("He's improving a lot," said Alessi) and Ilori ("If Lori plays up to potential, we'll have a genuine scoring threat," stated the coach). Midfielders Currier and Boza are solid starters while Raphael and junior Allan Strong vie for the other starting position. A probable starter in the fullback position will be junior Jeffry Tyrell, who was named to the Greater Boston All-League team in 1977.

The 1978 schedule will be identical to the 1977 schedule, with the exception of the first game. This year, the Beavers will replace Clark with Harvard as the season opener. Harvard and MIT have not met in soccer since 1975, when the team from that up-stream liberal arts college won 7-1. No MIT soccer team has defeated Harvard since 1963, losing seven and tying twice since.

The schedule appears moderately difficult, with Boston, Harvard, and BU listed as contenders in a preseason poll. Brands, the 1976 Division II national champs, are sure to be out for revenge after 1977's overtime upset. The 1978 season begins tomorrow afternoon at 3pm, here against Harvard.

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