IM hockey has problems

By Gordon R. Haff

IM hockey this year witnessed the continuation of a trend which has been affecting that sport for the past several seasons. There is no "A" league this year, but this shouldn't be that surprising to those who have followed IM hockey for the last few years. At one time, "A" league hockey was composed of mostly living groups. The names which come to mind as the hockey powers of the past are living groups - Theta Chi, and Lambda Chi Alpha to name two.

However, even as long as three years ago, the trend was changing. That year Fiji/Baker defeated LCA for the championship. It was a victory for the large team. In addition to Fiji and Baker people, the team had skaters from East Campus and most importantly, a superb goalie from Burton, Dave August '76.

The trend continued. Last year the only living group entry in "A" league was an SAE/Fiji conglomerate. All the other entries were "department teams." However, the squads like Mechanical Engineering and Metallurgy in fact drew from all over campus.

This year, only two teams signed up to play "A" league - Metallurgy and Mechanical engineering, and as a result the top league was cancelled. Metallurgy and Mechanical Engineering will probably set up some kind of schedule between each other and the Junior Varsity.

I talked to Dean Novelli '81, IM hockey manager, about what he saw as possible solutions to this year's problem. Novelli agreed that this year was a problem. Specifically he said that "It's unfortunate that two good teams can't play because they don't have a league." However, he didn't see an easy solution. While contriving that separate living group and independent divisions in "A" league, he said that he couldn't see having enough teams to make that plan feasible in the near future.

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Half Time

As with most things at MIT, Novelli is concerned about the quality at the top level. "The trend is for fewer and fewer" he said. "And it's not surprising to me. I've noticed at the top level, it seems like the teams that are in it are the same teams every year. Those who have followed IM hockey for the last few years, should realize that this is a problem. Specifically he said that "It's unfortunate that two good teams can't play because they don't have a league." However, he didn't see an easy solution. While contriving that separate living group and independent divisions in "A" league, he said that he couldn't see having enough teams to make that plan feasible in the near future.

At least, referees don't appear to have a difficultly with hockey this year. Although the numbers are lower than in previous years, Novelli is very pleased with the quality. For that matter, he said that his biggest problem was having to pay people less than they were worth, since almost all the refs are experienced yet he can't pay everyone at the top rate.

The opening of this hockey season has also been blessed with no serious mechanical problems related to the aging risk. Despite relatively warm weather, the ice opened barely behind schedule in contrast to last year's numerous difficulties.

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