**Sports**

**Swimmer regains interest**

By Gregg Stave

Karen Kallman once came to MIT last September she wasn’t sure if she would join the Women’s Swim Team. After meeting Coach John Benedict and members of the team she decided to swim and began attending practices. By the end of the season, Karen had set eight individual event school records and three meet records setting freestyle relay teams as she led the team to its most successful season (8-1) to date.

Karen began swimming seriously at the age of ten. Seriously meant working out four hours a day, which, looking back, Karen believes was excessive. She was, however, nationally ranked at the time and that amount of hard work and dedication was necessary to maintain her status.

At the age of fourteen Karen hit a plateau and missed qualifying for the AAU Nationals by half a second for three straight seasons. She became disgusted with swimming because she was no longer improving and dropped down from swimming 10,000 yards to 2,000 yards per day. Although she continued to swim on a team through high school she did not enjoy it.

Arriving at MIT in the fall, Karen swam during open swimming time and met several members of the Women’s team. She also met Coach Benedict and liked the atmosphere surrounding MIT swimming. After a few weeks of practice Karen saw that she was improving and began to enjoy swimming again.

Coach Benedict’s attitude toward swimming was important to Karen. She feels that “you have to work very hard but it’s not too high pressured. If you have to miss a practice because of schoolwork it’s okay.” Swimming did not interfere with academics. Instead, Karen likes the idea of going to practice because it’s “nice to do something different after classes.” Karen also enjoyed the fact that workouts were co-ed so that she could swim in lanes with the men’s team. She believes that she is more competitive with men and that made her work even harder during practices.

Highlights of her season included having the opportunity, even though it was at her own expense, to spend two weeks with the team training in Florida during January. Another high point for the freshman from Philadelphia was the chance to travel to the Nationals in Reno, Nevada. Previously, Karen felt that she “swam well this season, except at the Nationals.”

In his fourth year at MIT, John Benedict coaches both swim teams. According to the coach, Karen is “one of the toughest and most dedicated swimmers on both the Men’s and Women’s teams, but, even though she is a class swimmer there is a lot of room for improvement.” He enjoys working with Karen trying to figure out ways to better her times. She is a versatile swimmer and has already set two records in butterfly, three in freestyle and three more in individual medleys.

Karen is currently testing her skill as a runner on the newly formed Women’s Track Team. She is already looking forward to next year’s swim season.

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