Smith retiring from athletic director's job

By Bob Host

Athletic director Ross H. Smith will retire at the end of this academic year, Institute Vice President Constantine B. Simonides told the Athletic Board at its dinner Tuesday night at the Faculty Club.

Smith, who will step down at the normal retirement age of 65, has been athletic director at MIT since 1961. His successor will be chosen in a nationwide search by a committee chaired by Prof. James W. Mar, chairman of the Athletic Board. The committee will consist of from seven to nine members, including faculty members, students, alumni, and perhaps someone from the athletic department, according to Simonides.

The committee will advise Simonides, under whose jurisdiction the athletic department falls, and furnish a short list of candidates. According to Simonides, anybody can be a candidate, and anyone on the committee will be allowed to nominate a candidate. Within two weeks, the remaining members of the committee, as well as the guidelines that the committee will follow, will be determined.

Simoneides stated that the committee will follow the search procedure in place for the athletic director position. He added that the athletic department was not a subdivision of the Dean's Office, and as such, it reports to his office in matters such as these.

Comments about Smith's tenure from long-time members of the athletic department were generally favorable. Tennis coach Ed Crocker, a member of the Athletic Staff since 1957, remembers the development of new facilities that occurred during Smith's reign, specifically the J.B. Curci Indoor Tennis Center, which came about largely through the efforts of Smith, who worked closely with Curci on the matter.

The ice rink/field house/events center that is presently under construction has been in the planning stages for seven or eight years, Crocker added, and has been kept alive "largely through his [Smith's] persistent efforts." This occurred, the coach went on, in the face of some "very discouraging statements about the economy" which threatened to kill the project.

Gordon Kelly, head track and assistant football coach, who came to MIT in 1962, one year after Smith, noted that the director "runs a good department and is a good administrator." He added that the completion of the track and the entire Steinbrenner Stadium complex was due to Smith, who "bent over backwards" to help in the construction that was under way.

Athletic director Rollo H. Smith, according to Kelly, spent more than 20 years at MIT, and is facing a shaky financial future. He added that the completion of the track and the entire Steinbrenner Stadium complex was due to Smith, who "bent over backwards" to help in the construction that was under way.

Intramural supervisor Dave Michael, who came to MIT in 1961, said that Smith spent a lot of time on the project. "He worked closely with Curci on the matter," Crocker added, and has been kept alive "largely through his [Smith's] persistent efforts." This occurred, the coach went on, in the face of some "very discouraging statements about the economy" which threatened to kill the project.

Mr. Smith has generally said that Smith is expected to be named before the next academic year begins.

Simonides stated that the athletic department will not be dismantled, in contrast with the reorganization of the Dean for Student Affairs (OSA) Office.

Michael hopes that the new director will spend more time in day-to-day operations of the programs at the Institute.

Smith, who succeeded Richard L. Walsh as athletic director in 1961, is a 1936 graduate of Springfield College, which currently boasts at least five alumni on the MIT athletic staff, according to Kelly. Smith served as the assistant athletic director as well as director of physical education at Cornell before coming to MIT. He served as the athletic director at Boston University from 1947, and was named head lacrosse coach in 1949, a position in which he stayed when named assistant athletic director and physical education director three years later. One of his most recent positions was as chairman of the committee which organized rifle as an NCAA-sanctioned sport.

Sports

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Sports

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