Women’s b-ball does poorly over January, men do well

By Eric R. Fleming
The month of January was a busy one for basketball at MIT, with the results of the men and women coming out a great deal differently.

Jean Heiny’s women won only two of eight games last month; both lopsided victories over Eckford and Suffolk. In fact, all the games the Engineers played this month were blowouts of one way or another (unfortunately, Tech was on the wrong side of six of them). The games with Bates and Amherst were not close after the opening minutes of play. The match against WPI on the 24th was probably the worst game of all. The team had very little movement off the ball, forcing the outside shot, which wasn’t falling. This problem was dramatically brought out by the three-foot-floor shooting in the game. The next game against Suffolk (a 62-39 win) saw more offensive motion, resulting in much better shots.

Sophomore transfer Anita Flynn continues to lead the women in scoring, averaging around 11 points a game. He quickness and ball-handling skill are assets, but at times she tends to over-dribble and take the team out of its offense. The biggest surprise has been Louise Jandura ’84, a very young one, and needs time to develop in order to play consistently. Jandura, who has recently been moved to a starting position at forward, is certainly providing steady play. The team, due to the loss of forwards Donna Wilson and Lisa Richardson (both juniors), is a very young one, and needs time to develop in order to play consistent ball on the college level.

In contrast, the men have had a very good January, winning six of eight. The Engineers had a six-game winning streak snapped Saturday by a strong Amherst squad, 60-48, a game where the Lord Jeffs used an 11-2 midway through the second half to put the game away. The only other loss last month was to Bowdoin at Brunswick, Maine.

Captain Bob Clarke ’84 has been the big story for Tech. The 6-4 forward has asserted himself at both ends of the floor, averaging 15 points and ten rebounds in his last six games. Clarke has definitely improved his game over last year; as an example, his free-throw percentage in 79-80 was below 50 percent, now it is well over 70 percent. Guard Mark Branch ’83 and Steve Williams ’82 provide the team with a good, steady backcourt (the duo averaged 37 points a game between them). The most improved player for the Engineers is Lane Wilson ’82. The transfer from Brigham Young is doing the job at the defensive end of the floor. Wilson has become more aggressive on the boards, and improved his game on the baseline. The 6-6 center has done better at the offensive end as well, but still needs to become more confident in his game.

All phases of the game seem to be working well; the bench is contributing (25 points in a win over Curry last week), the high-motion, good shot selection offense of Fran O’Brien’s is much smoother than early in the season, and the defense is performing with increasing consistency.

At 9-7, the team has a decent shot of equaling or bettering last year’s 13-9 mark, but it won’t be easy. Division III power Clark invades the Cage in February, with WPI and a much-improved Connecticut College team closing out the schedule on the road. That trio of games will probably determine whether or not Tech will improve on a most-successful 79-80 campaign.