by Martin Dickau

Coming off of its best season ever, the MIT Football Club will open the 1981 season at Stonehill College in North Easton, Massachusetts, tomorrow at 1pm. This contest will be the first time the schools have met on the gridiron, and part of MIT’s effort to establish itself on the national football scene after an absence of three quarters of a century.

In 1900 the MIT student body voted to discontinue the varsity football team after a variety of player died during an intramural contest. For 77 years after that incident, MIT did not have a football team on anything but an officially sanctioned non-varsity sport -- e.g. a club.

The Engineer’s first season was dismal as best as the team went 0-6, but they began to turn things around in 1979, going 3-4, and in doing so setting the stage for last year’s spectacular season which saw the team go 6-1 and capture the National Independents Crown. This year the Engineers will no longer be independent, but will compete as members of the New England Conference of the National Collegiate Club Football Association. MIT has been ranked third in the conference which includes Assumption, Bentley, Fitchburg State, Hartford, Providence, Roger Williams, Stonehill, and Worcester State.

Engineers’ head coach Dwight Smith expects that being in the conference will mean stiffer competition this year. The defense, however, will be an unknown variable. "We have a good nucleus of players returning," he explained, "but with only 36 players, our greatest weakness is lack of depth."

Smith will have Barry Jordan ‘82, returning at the quarterback position. Last year Jordan passed for 496 yards and four touchdowns. He will share duties with freshman Vincent Martindill. Also returning will be Tom Fawcett ‘83, at offensive center. Last year Fawcett was an All-American at tackle. Guards Bob Noper ‘83, and Steve Staydak ‘83, will be the team’s captains.

The team’s defense lost several key players, but safety Doug Gouchose ‘82, will be returning in his third year. The defense, however, will be an unknown variable with a lack of size and several inexperienced players waiting to be put to the test.

Still, Smith feels that his team has good speed, and if they can develop a better passing game, a good season is in store. Most teams only four years old do not even dare hope for as much.

Football Club to open 1981 season Saturday

The MIT Club Football team has been hard at work preparing for its season opener tomorrow. (Photo by Jonathan Cohen)