Games people play

By Martin Dickau

With all of the many sports MIT has to offer, it is no surprise that a student occasionally meets up with a sport of which he has no knowledge. So, as a service to the MIT community, we offer here the first in a series of articles examining the working of some of the lesser-known athletic activities.

Europeans will tell you that Americans are basically very ingenious, so, perhaps it is fitting that the first sport to be dealt with is one played in elementary school days? I felt that the only difference between the two games was the age of the players and the size of the teams. How wrong I was!

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I was, admittedly, one such ignorant American. I had always figured that rugby was nothing special. After all, what red-blooded American kid did not play "kill-the-boys-with-the-ball" in his elementary school days? I felt that the only difference between the two games was the age of the players and the size of the teams. "How wrong I was!

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Rugby is played in two forty-minute halves by four teams of eleven players on a field slightly larger than a football field (100 x 75 yards). The referee supervises the game, and only stops play when someone commits an infraction, when the ball is trapped beneath a pile of men without hope of being moved, or when the ball travels out of bounds (called "out of touch" by those who know).

The game starts with a typical football-style kickoff, and drop kicks in play are restyled by either a lineout (soccer-style throw-in), a kick, or a curious phenomenon called a "scrum". A scrum looks a little like a football huddle, except both teams have their backs around each other, and the ball is thrown into their midst.

The players then all try to kick the ball out to one of their wing teammates, who picks up the ball and runs mostly towards the goal line, occasionally passing the ball to another teammate when a tackle seems imminent.

A tackle is defined as the situation when one player is in another's grasp and falls to the ground. Upon hitting the ground, the player must let go of the ball and may not play it, as his tackle may not, until he has regained his feet.

Points are scored when the ball is touched to the ground in one of the teams' ends (called a "try"), or on a goal field. Tries are worth four points, and field goals are worth three. Players attempt to score as many points as possible before a two-point conversion is kicked from a line going through the goal posts where the ball touched the ground and must go through the uprights in the center.

There is no blocking in rugby; in fact, a player in front of the ball carrier who attempts to block another, whether a tackle or a defensive stop, is called for an off-side penalty. Any attempt to injure another player is not allowed, the penalty for the equivalent of unintentional contact is kicked from a line going through the goal posts where the ball touched the ground and must go through the uprights in the center.

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The seniors' tennis team won their first match of the season against a team of fourteen. The game was won by a score of 6-4, 6-2, 6-1.

Three batters. A sacrifice bunt brought in a run for each side. Then two outs another walk loaded the bases again, and the Polar Bears' cleanup hitter hit a sacrifice fly to right.

MT powered back in the third with two back-to-back leadoff doubles by Todd Huf- man '83 and Steve Williams '82.

The MIT Men's Rugby Club hits hard against Oxford University.

Tennis

Coming off of a fine-three-preseason Southern road trip, the men's tennis team opened the 1982 season with a 6-3 victory over visiting Wesleyan University last Saturday afternoon. The Engineers are looking forward to having a fine year, as the top seven seeds looked very strong, and number one seed Vartan Passian '83 is back from last year's hip injury.

A bright spot in the Southern swing, which saw the team go 2-5, was the play of Will Sauer '85, who was undefeated in singles play. Sauer is currently ranked fifth in the nation. Other members of the team are, in order of seeding, John Chen '84, Tom Ranschell '84, team captain George Huns '83, Chinin Huhn '83, and Dave Pope '84.

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