Tennis bubble back; cost not yet known

By Jerri-Lynn Scofield

The inflatable structure housing the J. B. Carr Indoor Tennis Facility was reinstated at the end of June at a yet to be determined cost to MIT, according to Paul Barrett, Director of Physical Plant.

"We're negotiating with the insurance company to get a substantial settlement," commented Barrett.

The bubble collapsed after last April's blizzard, which dumped more than a foot of snow on MIT and the surrounding vicinity. Barrett explained ". . . there was a failure in the electrical system, in the wiring that provided inflation air for the bubble." Most damage was caused by the facility's central lighting system, which provided excellent illumination for tennis playing but whose lights have been placed around the perimeter of the tennis courts. The relocated lighting system should not pose a threat to the structural integrity of the bubble should it collapse again.

The severe damage to the bubble necessitated sending it to Buffalo to its manufacturers, the Bidar Corporation, for repair. During a blizzard in January, 1978, the MIT tennis bubble also collapsed. This bubble was replaced at a cost of between 60,000 and 75,000 dollars. John Berlinguet, manager of building maintenance, supervised the bubble's repair, Barrett noted. Berlinguet, who is on vacation, could not be reached for comment.

Barrett noted the lighting system has been redesigned and replaced, with a more conventional lighting system whose lights have been placed around the perimeter of the tennis courts. The relocated lighting system should not pose a threat to the structural integrity of the bubble should it collapse again.

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