Hoop drops pair to Babson, Crimson

By Eric R. Fleming

Although it wasn't the kind of opening that one would tell one's friends about, the men's basketball team did have some reason to smile after the beginning of its 75th season.

Last Tuesday night, a much-improved Babson team stormed into Rockwell Cage, fresh off the heels of two easy wins in its own invitational tourney the weekend before. The rivalry between the two schools has been a good one in recent years, with the last three meetings having been decided by a total of nine points, the closest winning two.

The 1982 chapter started out the same way, as neither the visiting Beavers nor the host Beavers could get a big advantage. Babson relied on the outside shooting of guards Bill Allard and Jack Sanniak, while MIT countered Center Mark Johnson on the inside, the recipient of good lob passes from Robert Joseph '83.

The turning point came with three minutes left in the first half, when Babson applied half-court pressure. MIT could not penetrate, and as a result could muster just one free throw in the last 2:49. A 27-17 lead became a 36-27 Babson lead as the first twenty minutes ended. Significant in the numbers were MIT's poor free throw shooting (43 percent), and 18 turnovers, a problem which had plagued the squad in the pre-season.

The Engineers still had problems with the press at the beginning of the second half, as Babson slowly extended its margin, which grew as large as 16 before the final buzzer sounded. MIT also had to deal with foul trouble when both Johnson and senior guard Mark Branch picked up their fourth fouls early in the half. The hosts narrowed the deficit to as little as eleven (59-48) at 5:10, but could not get any closer as the visiting Beavers went on 10 with a 72-59 victory.

Saturday, MIT made history of sorts, being the first American team to play in Harvard's new Briggs Cage, which finally opened after a year's delay. Unfortunately, the Engineers could not spoil the official Harvard opener and lost 83-58.

The host Crimson jumped out of the blocks early, taking 6-0 at 18:15 of the first half, and 14-4 (18:03) leads before MIT could get untracked. Branch Lind center (14:0) leads before MIT could get untracked. Branch Lind center (14:0). But could not get any closer as the visiting Beavers went on 10 with a 72-59 victory.

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