**Sports**

**Eric R. Fleming**

**MIT volleyball - the best team by far**

Question: What is the best college team in the Boston area, in any sport? Boston College's basketball or football team? Babson's soccer squad? Maybe Harvard's hockey team? I submit "none of the above." My pick is our own women's volleyball team, which stepped through the state tournament Saturday for a third straight year.

OK, I know I'm comparing apples and oranges. I know "best" has no specific set of criteria. I also know of no area teams which have dominated their opposition as our spikers have, especially during the last two years.

MIT's accomplishments speak for themselves. The Engineers' six-set record is 36-0 this year, 3-5 over the last two years, and an amazing 10-13 since 1981. The Engineers are ranked fourth in the National Collegiate Athletic Association Division III volleyball coaches' poll, the only Eastern and the only unbeaten team to make the top ten. Only Springfield, Northeastern, and Mount Holyoke have managed to win a game in 81 tries against MIT this year. Watching the team gives one the feeling they are playing at a higher level than any competition to date.

Against the University of Massachusetts, for example, the team was down 0-5 in the first game. Did MIT panic? Nope. The team settled down, and decided to play the game of volleyball as it knows how. Before anyone realized it, MIT took the game, 15-9. The second game was a continuation of the first. Serving, setting, spiking, saving, blocking, MIT took the edge in all phases of the game - final score, 15-0.

Although the whole team is responsible for the success, there are times when one player takes over and dominates a stretch of a game. Hitter Lori Cantis '85 scored three straight points on two spikes and a tap to break open the second game, while Julie Koster '85 made three key blocks to tie the first game at six. These furries can demoralize the opponent, and when combined with consistent play from the other team members, make life tough for MIT's opponents.

The team came within one game of making the NCAA Division III final four last year. Going that one step farther is the goal for 1983. The task, obviously, will not be an easy one. The competition will get tougher as MIT moves on in the tournament, but the experience gained in 1982 will help the team immensely.

Head coach Kathy Alman '78 and her troops have had a phenomenal season, no matter what happens. Their efforts are something they and all of MIT can and should be proud of.

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