Rugby finishes second in home tourney

By Jim Boyd

The MIT Rugby Club ended its fall season last weekend with a second-place showing in MIT's annual tournament. After a tough season of league play in which MIT suffered a four-game winning streak, the injury-riddled team hung together against solid competition and came within one score of bringing home the championship. In the first round of A-division play, policed competition gave both players and spectators a day to remember. After the University of Lowell placed a strong first half against powerful Boston College, Lowell could not take advantage of a strong second-half effort and fell to the Eagles, 26-0.

Boston University faced the host team in what turned out to be the MITs best performance of the season. With just two returning starters from last fall's team, MIT's players had trouble getting comfortable with each other, causing penalties, sloppy play, and missed tackles throughout the first half.

But after a strong week of practice, MIT pulled together for a sound victory over the Terriers. With the wind at their backs, the BU players kept the early play in MIT's end and drew first blood after 15 minutes with a drop-kick field goal, 3-0. It appeared that MIT might be in for a long afternoon, but with the leadership of Ben Paul-G, the Beavers bounced right back.

MIT used great ball pursuit to prevent BU. The crowd and the home team came alive with a thunderous hit of a BU ball carrier by Paul. On a crucial BU scrum-down, lock Roark Carey-G stole the hook and the ball was pulled straight out of outside-center John O'Sullivan-G.

O'Sullivan powered the ball over for his first try at MIT and the kick after by Paul gave MIT a 6-3 lead. Determined to give up the advantage while still facing the wind, the backs, led by Jonathan Shuber '87, punished BU ball carriers the rest of the way.

In the second half, MIT dominated BU with the timely kicking of Leo Casey-G and the consistent tackling and rucking of the BU players. Ball possession re-warded MIT with its second try when scrum-half Damion Sacco-G carrying over from 15 yards out.

Another kick by Paul gave MIT a comfortable 12-3 lead, but the hungry Beavers side did not let up. A Casey kick over the heads of the BU backs and his quick move to the ball forced the defender to tackle him in the try zone, which is illegal. The referee awarded Leo his first try of the season and MIT coasted to a satisfying 18-3 victory.

In the championship game, MIT faced off against BC as the growing crowd cheered loudly. The game was played evenly but both teams exhibited clean hitting, accurate kicking, and good ball control. With the wind at their backs, the Eagles were able to kick effectively, and a defensive breakdown cost MIT an ear-ly try, 6-0.

Determined to take home the trophy, Paul was everywhere on the field, scoring a try and a try assist, as the crowd of 1,000 roared to the final whistle, sending the Beavers home with a satisfying 15-6 win.

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Monday, November 17 (12 Noon — 5 p.m.)
Location 13
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