Men's gymnastics defeats CCNY

By Tim Holt

The MIT men's gymnastics team, after a poor performance against the University of Massachusetts, regained its confidence at a four-team meet at West Point, NY, this past Saturday. Although it lost to the US Military Academy and Cortland College, the MIT team performed well enough to keep its hopes of postseason competition alive, defeating the City College of New York.

The MIT team went to the meet determined not to be overwhelmed by West Point and Cortland, two teams that consistently score 50 to 60 points higher than MIT. Since there were four teams competing, two teams competed on one event while the other two competed on another event. MIT and CCNY were paired up as were West Point and Cortland. The meet started for MIT and CCNY on pommel horse. Most of the MIT gymnasts had consistent routines, giving MIT a slight edge over CCNY after this event. MIT gymnasts produced excellent routines on floor exercise. In particular, Mark Melanson '89 scored a career high 8.35. CCNY also had many good routines, but MIT won the event by almost four points. The last event for the first half of the meet for MIT and CCNY was vaulting. Most of the vaults from both teams brought high scores, but MIT again won the event. Co-captain Eric Reifschneider '89 had an superb vault, with a team high score of 8.25.

The still rings started out the second half of the meet, it is an event in which MIT shows consistency through all positions. This reputation held true as MIT increased its lead by another three and a half points. CCNY hoped to regain momentum on the high bar, but MIT clearly dominated the event. Many CCNY gymnasts attempted difficult moves without success. Another big letdown was that one of the high bar competitors for CCNY hurt his shoulder and could not compete. The biggest highlight of this event for MIT was when co-captain Norman Chen '89 performed a routine in which the gymnast flies over the bar, switches directions, and reaches out on the other side.

After this point in the competition, the MIT team knew it was on its way to a strong finish. The last event would be parallel bars, and MIT wanted to score at least 30 points to give it a strong qualifying score for postseason competition. This turned out to be the case as MIT scored 31.2 points. MIT had its largest event difference over CCNY on this event. The scores were also added up MIT had beaten CCNY by a score of 191.8 to 168.9. But West Point and Cortland each scored in the mid-200s.

In actuality, MIT was not really trying to win the meet so much as to obtain a qualifying score for postseason competition. This was indeed the correct philosophy, because the team was informed this work is currently in bars. It qualified for national competition. The MIT gymnasts were able to maintain this position by scoring well at their last meet at University of Vermont this upcoming Saturday.

Editor's note: Tim Holt '90 is a member of the MIT men's gymnastics team.