

Men's Tennis Plays Well in Spring, but Struggles in Fall

Roundup, from Page 15

Four-year letter winner: Manish Bhatia '93

Record: 8-7 (Combined seasons)
The team started out its spring season quite well, but ended up with disappointing results. During the spring campaign, the Engineers had lost only one match against Division III schools until the final two dual meets, with crushing losses at the hands of Williams College (6-3), and Amherst College (5-4). As a result, the team was denied its third straight trip to the NCAA Division III Championships, and finished ranked 19th in the nation in Division III, lower than in past years.

However, some members of the team turned out some remarkable individual performances. Walpole became the first MIT tennis player to be named an All-America in both singles and doubles. He and Muelhoefer, the team's top doubles pair, were for most of the season, at the top of the national rankings, and gained an entry to the individual tournament of the NCAA Championships. Bhatia, who never played lower than Number 2 singles in his career at MIT, qualified for the singles tournament, along with Walpole. Muelhoefer and Walpole reached the semifinals of the NCAA's, losing a close two-setter to the eventual champions, from Claremont College. The duo finished the season ranked fourth in Division III, and Walpole (22nd) and Bhatia (49th), both attained

national rankings in singles. In the previous fall season, Muelhoefer and Walpole had won the 1992 Rolex National Small College Division III Doubles Championships.

The graduation of Bhatia and Walpole gave the team a new look in the Fall portion of the 1993-94 season, as two freshmen occupied the bottom two starting positions to fill the void left by the top two players. Things did not look bright early on, when the Engineers were blown out by Division I opponents Boston College and Boston University. However, the team managed to win all of its matches against Division III competition, defeating Babson College and Clark University, to finish the fall season at 2-2.

The highlight of the fall season was the Rolex New England Regional Small College Tennis Championship, held at MIT, where Muelhoefer and Nick Tsai '94 made a miraculous comeback victory in the finals against a team from the US Coast Guard Academy. As a result, the duo earned a trip to the Rolex National Small College Tennis Championships. It was a return trip for Muelhoefer, who he won his third consecutive title in the regional tournament, with three different partners. He also managed to reach the semifinals of the singles tournament after coming close to elimination twice in the earlier rounds. Unfortunately, Muelhoefer and Tsai, who had come into the national tournament with high expectations, were eliminated in the first

round. However, they were able to salvage a seventh place finish, which placed them currently ranked ninth in Division III in doubles. The team is presently ranked 25th in the nation among Division III schools.

Women's Tennis

Captain: Spring, Claudia Hung '93; Fall, Valerie Tan '94

MVP: No selection

Four-year letter winners: Pratima Rao '93, Sue Bach '93, Seema Jayachandran '93, Hung

Record: 10-6 (Combined seasons)

In terms of competitive success, 1993 was the best year ever for the team, according to coach Candy Royer. A team qualification to the NCAA Division III Championship Tournament earned by a virtue of a 14-5 record was the unquestioned highlight of the year for the women's tennis team. The team had never before qualified for the NCAA's and the 14 wins represented a tie for the highest win total in a single season for women's tennis.

In the fall, the team got off to a quick start, winning its first eight matches. Unfortunately, back to back New England Women's 8 conference losses to Smith College ended the hopes of an unbeaten season. However, revenge was sweet in the NEW 8 Tournament, however and the Engineers rolled through Wheaton College, Smith, and Brandeis on the way to MIT's first NEW 8 tennis championship. Sue Bach '93 and Janet Chen '94 were named to the All-Conference team in singles, and Bach and Valerie Tan '94 were selected in doubles as well. Candy Royer was voted coach of the year.

The Engineers traveled to Northfield, Minn., for the NCAA Division III Championships. The team suffered setbacks to the University of California, San Diego (9-0), and the

College of St. Thomas (6-3), before defeating Smith College, to finish the season ranked 11th in the nation.

Individual players in the national rankings at the end of the '92-'93 were Frederica Turner '95 at number 34 in singles, and Turner and Tan were the 22nd ranked Division III doubles team. The squad chose not to select a most valuable player.

The fall campaign of the 93-94 season went quite well for the team, with a ninth-place finish at the New England's, and a third place finish in the NEW 8 Conference. The team competed in the New England tournament without the services of its number one singles player, Frederica Turner '95, who is currently ranked ninth in the East. The team's post-seasons hopes were derailed with a 4-3 loss to eventual champion Brandeis University in the NEW 8 tournament.

Men's Indoor Track and Field

Captain: Dan Corcoran '94

MVP: Mike Piepergerdes '93

Record: 11-1

1993 saw the birth of the Quad Cup, a series of meets between the best track teams in the New England to determine the best "dual meet team." MIT track was undefeated going into the last meet as was Williams College. Williams proved to be a little too strong, but MIT finished the regular season with a respectable 11-1 record. Championships were again a strong point as the Engineers finished 6th in the National Championships due to a 2nd place finish by Matt Robinson '94 in the pole vault with a new varsity record of 16' 3 1/2" and a 3rd place by Mike Piepergerdes '92 in the 1,500-meter run.

Men's Outdoor Track and Field

Captains: Jay Chiang '94, Dan Corcoran '94

MVP: Mike Piepergerdes '93

Record: 6-1

As the track team headed outdoors they took their aspirations with them. Because of a lack of sprinters and quarter-milers the Engineers did not expect to do as well as they did indoors. Hard work and great competitiveness proved that expectation incorrect. The regular season was an average 6 and 1, but was highlighted by a very inspirational victory over Division II opponent Springfield. The team set 20 personal bests in that meet. The Championships saw a less talented team defeat many top teams in the New England Division III Championships for a third place finish, narrowly missing second place. At the National Championships MIT continued its successful ways. Mike Piepergerdes ran very well in winning his trials in the 1,500-meter, but had some complications due to graduation. Mike flew back to MIT right after his trials and flew back to Cleveland immediately after graduation because his final was 1 1/2 days after his trial. This did not seem to affect Mike as he ran a perfect race to finish second to the defending national champion in a school record of 3:50.36.

Matt Robinson showed remarkable courage by vaulting well enough to make the finals in the pole vault despite a very badly sprained ankle. He actually limped down the runway before vaulting, and considering vaulting's dependence on speed, his accomplishments were remarkable. In the finals they changed the pit around because of a change in wind direction, thus delaying the start of the event by an hour. By this time Matt's ankle was cold and even more swollen, leaving him unable to get off the ground.

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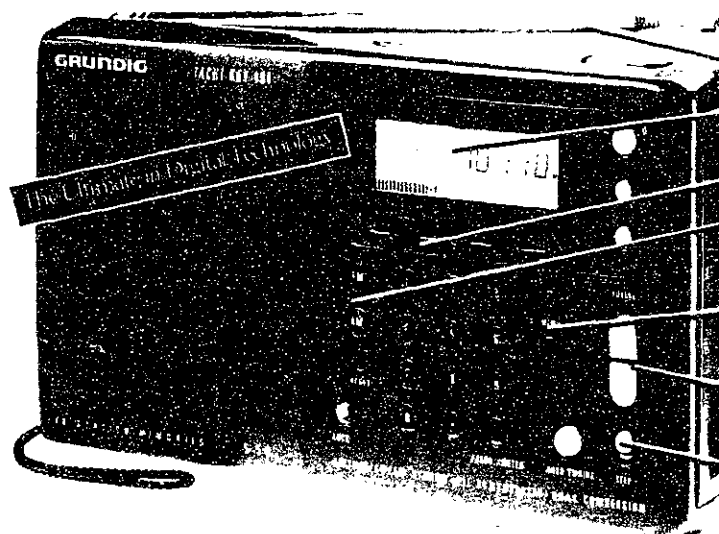
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