The MIT varsity heavyweight crew trails Columbia University in its first race of the season Saturday afternoon. Behind from the start, the crew lost to Columbia for the first time in three years.

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By Neeraj Gupta

The men's heavyweight crews began defending their Division I national title with a tough day of racing against Division I league rival Columbia University. In the first race of the day, the second freshman four with coxswain finished the 2000-meter course in 7 minutes 42 seconds, beating Columbia by 9 seconds. Freshman coach Stu Schmill said, "They had a good race and I was pleased. They controlled the race from start to finish."

In the next race, the first freshman eight lost to Columbia by 15 seconds. "They basically missed the first few stokes of the race, got down, and rowed as poorly as they've ever rowed. It was our first intercollegiate race and I think it was a good learning experience," Schmill said.

The final two races of the day were the varsity and second varsity eights. The second varsity finished behind Columbia in a time of 6:17. In an exciting race, the boat was down by open water with 500 meters left and managed to pull even by the finish and salvage a tie.

Coxswain Peter Yao '95 described the race as "We had a pretty good start, sagged in the middle of the race, and finally pulled it together for the last 500 meters of the race."

The varsity eight was beaten by Columbia for the first time in three years. The MIT boat was down at the start and never was able to make up the lost ground, finishing 6 seconds behind Columbia, in a time of 6:12. Varsity captain Loren Thais '94 said, "It was a decent row, but we were not really prepared to race. We will be ready for next week."

Next Sunday the men's heavyweight crews race Boston University and Boston College in a three way race on the Charles River.

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