

card against the likes of Iowa, defending Big Ten champ; Oregon State, defending PCC king, and BYU, 8th-ranked in the latest AP poll. Five of six pre-tourney starts are on the road.

With conference members, plus this year's guest team, Cornell, scheduled for 13 more games before Tuesday this picture could change. But the Tigers, with Guard Norm Stewart leading pre-tourney scorers with a 25.5 average and Chuck Denny playing better than expected at center, command the most respect at this writing.

If they maintain that edge another week they will be facing not only what is taking shape as the best-balanced field in meet history, but a high precedent hurdle as well. No defending champion ever has repeated successively. Fact is, only one repeat-seeker has reached the finals the year following its title haul. Kansas lost an 87-93 verdict to Kansas State in 1952, following a conquest in '51 by its NCAA champions.

Missouri whaled Kansas State, 89-71, in last year's championship round to bag its first crown since 1949. It rolled over Nebraska, 75-58, in the opening round, and throttled Oklahoma's Nimble Nubbins, 95-87, in the semifinal. The Stalecups came into last year's auditorium fixture with a 4-2 log, which included wins over Iowa, Indiana, and Wisconsin. They were favored for the title and played smoothly to that pattern all the way. Two regulars, Center Bob Reiter and Forward Med Park are gone from that club.

MU again has drawn Nebraska as a first round foe, leading off the second night of first round play at 7:30 Wednesday. Kansas and Cornell play the nightcap.

BYU tore considerable gloss off Colorado, the league's early surprise, with a fearsome double flogging at Provo, 70-53, and 84-53, over the weekend. The defending conference champions were fresh from a 60-57 conquest of Iowa and carried a 3-0 into the Utah highlands.