

Anchored by an 87-76 conquest of previously-unbeaten ~~its~~ pre-Vanderbilt in ~~knix~~ tournament dress rehearsal, Iowa State is poised to shoot for its first Big Sevenpost-Christmas crown this weeken when the tenth annual dribble derby opens a four-day run in Municipal auditorium.

Thr Cyclones will tote the best record among tourney entries into the big arena ~~yv5~~-1,

The Cyclones, playing their second season under Bill Strannigan , will come into the ~~Rig~~ big arena with the best record among tournament teams at 5-1. Furthermore they own a 13.0-point-per -game spread, five-tenth wider than that of Missouri's defending tournement champions. Vanderbilt had won six straight before it invaded Ames Friday, was 8th- ranked in the latest AP poll and 19th on UP. ~~Quix~~ Tulsa was undefeated in four games until running afoul of the Cyclones December 10, 50-62. Only three points, a 62-65 loss to Denver at Denver, Wednesday, separates the Iowans from a perfect slate.

They thus qualify as the highest barrier to a Missouri repeat. This is rare stature for a team ~~thatxhasxfinished~~ which never has finished higher than third ~~nine~~ previous meets(1948 and 1954) and has languished in last place twice and seventh three times.

Happily the ~~Rix~~ Cyclones and Tigers are in opposite breakets. The former will run into immediate trouble since it drew Kansas State in the opening round in the nightcap of Tuesday's opening card. This ~~ix~~ should be the tighest battle of the first-round four game set . State , 3-3, has played a tougher preliminary slate, losing only 79-86 to ~~Kouskon~~ well-regarded Houston, Thursday in Houston in its final pre-~~kax~~ meet ~~staxk~~ test.