

Colorado Is Surprise Of Big Seven Season

COLORADO is the surprise team of the Big Seven's early basketball milling as league schools edge toward their tenth annual tournament late this month at Municipal Auditorium.

Before the season opened there was sharp division of opinion concerning Buffalo fortunes for 1955-56. Some railbirds thought loss of four starters from last year's conference champions would drop the Herd into the lower reaches of the league. Others maintained the momentum of the last two years which has seen C. U. represent the league in N. C. A. A. tournament play would carry it into contention right down to the wire.

Better Than Expected.

Even their most optimistic backers did not expect a 3-0 Buff reading at this date. Among the victims are two defending conference champions Oregon State of the P. C. C. and Iowa of the Big Ten. Bebe Lee's madeover club. . . . Jim Ranglos and Mel Coffman who shared one forward spot last year represent the only starting returnees. . . . tumbled State 63 to 53, at Corvallis and edged the Hawkeyes, 60 to 57, Monday in Boulder.

The latter conquest, of course, was the most significant. It marked Iowa's first defeat in three starts. It should be noted the Hawkeyes lost only one regular from last year's fourth-place N. C. A. A. finishers, and are favored over Illinois and Indiana to repeat. Furthermore, the Buffalos were without the services of one of their regular guards, Mick Mansfield, who wrenched a knee at Corvallis.

In between these victories, C. U. overran Oregon, 68-49.

Colorado is winning with ball-control, scoring balance and the same resolute defense that has earned the Big Seven championship of that department the past two seasons.

The Buffs put up an average

of only fifty-five shots a game in their first three. They have scored fewer points than any other league team, 191, but restricted the enemy to an average of 53.0. Two men, Ranglos and Bill Peterson, an unheralded senior guard, are sailing among the first seventeen pre-tournament scorers with respective averages of 13.3 and 12.0.

C. U. runs into another rugged test tomorrow and Saturday in a 2-game set with Brigham Young, eighth-ranked in the latest A. P. poll, at Provo.

Two Others Share Spot.

Those two games, plus the Kansas-S. M. U. match at Dallas, and the Missouri-Indiana affair at Columbia, both Saturday night, will hold the spotlight through the remainder of the week.

Impressive as it has been, C. U. holds no better than a share of the pre-tournament lead since Kansas, eighteenth-rated on the most recent A. P. ballot, and Iowa State, also are carrying 3-0 marks.

Cornell, this year's guest team, lost a perfect record when upset by Harvard, 59-81, last Saturday.

Norm Stewart, Missouri's big blond forward-guard, holds a wide lead in the individual point derby with a 26.5 average. He has been beyond thirty points twice in the Tigers' first four games.

Here are the top fifteen pre-tourney scorers through games of December 13:

			g.	fg.	ft-fta.	pf.	tp.	ave.
N.	Stewart,	g.	Mo.	4	42	22-29	11	106 26.5
C.	Rolles,	g.	Cornell	2	19	11-13	5	49 24.5
C.	Smith,	f.	Nebr.	4	24	26-35	10	74 18.5
G.	T'mps'n,	g.	Ia. St.	3	16	22-33	6	54 18.0
J.	Parr,	c.	K. St.	3	20	12-20	12	52 17.3
L.	Bacher,	c.	Okla.	4	23	22-29	12	68 17.0
D.	Dobbs,	g.	Kas.	3	18	12-17	6	48 16.0
D.	Meade,	g.	Cornell	2	10	11-15	4	31 15.5
J.	Medsker,	c.	Ia. St.	3	19	8-11	6	46 15.3
J.	King,	f.	Okla.	4	17	25-33	10	59 14.7
C.	Vogt,	f.	Ia. St.	3	14	16-19	5	44 14.7
R.	Zelev,	c.	Cornell	2	8	12-15	5	28 14.0
J.	Ranglos,	f.	Colo.	3	15	10-16	7	40 13.3
G.	Elstun,	f.	Kas.	3	16	7-11	2	39 13.0
P.	Vicens,	g.	K. St.	4	13	11-17	6	37 12.3