

Cyclones' Late Holiday Worth the Wait

They Practiced On Christmas.

By Maury White.

Iowa State's basketball squad didn't have a very merry Christmas this year but, man, it was set Saturday to welcome the new year!

The 15-man Cyclone squad stayed in Ames during Christmas weekend when most people were consorting with Santa Claus and did nothing more exciting than practice.

Since, and probably part-

ly because of this diligence, Coach Bill Strannigan's team has received the best present of all—the Big Seven Conference tournament title.

Six of the squad scattered from Kansas City after Friday night's 67-56 title victory over Kansas and nine arrived back in Des Moines by train Saturday afternoon.

They had the trophy, a big gold-plated basketball. They had some fond memories. They also had an 8-1 basket-

ball record and quiet confidence about the future.

"I don't even want to think about the league season today," said Coach Strannigan. "I just want to spend the day enjoying what we won."

Four of the six who played in the title game — Gary Thompson, Lyle Frahm, John Crawford and Jerry Sandbulte — weren't on the train. Chuck Vogt and Don Medsker were.

Everybody was happy, but everybody was tired. There was very little talk about basketball.

Iowa State's young bunch (nine sophomores, three juniors) wasn't amazed that it had won. That victory over nationally - ranked Vanderbilt did a lot for its confidence.

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It is a pleasant chore to report that previous winners of the annual league meet have done all right during the regular season (which opens with Kansas State at Ames Saturday).

Five times in nine previous meets the tournament titlist has gone on to win a clear title or a share. The guest team won the first meet in 1946.

Kansas State won the 1947 meet and the '47-48 crown. Oklahoma won the next meet and split the league title with Nebraska.

Missouri Shared.

Missouri won the 1949 meet and shared in a three-way split (Kansas and Kansas State) for season honors. Kansas State and Kansas each pulled the trick in the next two years.

It didn't work in 1952, but

in '53 Kansas won its second meet and tied Colorado for season's honors. Last year Missouri won the tourney and Colorado took league honors.

This looks to be the best balanced Big Seven race since the 1948-49 season when an 8-4 record gave three schools a share of the top.

Huskers Strong.

Opinions varied, but most people are guessing that everyone except Oklahoma and Nebraska is capable of making a stout bid. And they're leery about the Huskers, too.

Iowa State's last title was in 1944-45 in Big Six days and every team except Missouri has won or shared a league title since then.

The 8-1 mark the Cy-
(over)