

Missouri, a solid favorite a week ago, still holds a slender edge for the No. 1 role, following Thursday night's 76-84 double-overtime loss to Houston at Houston in the final pre-meet game for tourney teams.

Pressing closely behind the Tigers in this order are California, the 1954 guest team; Colorado, Kansas State and Kansas. Only stunning form reversals will put Iowa State, Nebraska or winless Oklahoma into Thursday night's finals.

This is the most wide-open tournament situation since 1949 when Missouri tipped Oklahoma, 44-42, for the crown.

Here is the tournament bracket:

Monday.

8:00 p. m.—Colorado vs. Oklahoma.

9:45 p. m.—Nebraska vs. Missouri.

Tuesday.

8:00 p. m.—Kansas vs. Iowa State.

9:45 p. m.—Kansas State vs. California.

Missouri, ranked among the nation's top ten in both the latest A. P. and U. P. polls, found itself a notch closer to the on-rushing field after the loss at Houston. Normally there would be scant significance in a tight double-overtime defeat. But the Cougars were playing their sixth game in seven days and could manage no better than seventh place in the all-College meet at Oklahoma City, where they tumbled before sophomoric O. C. U., 65-72 and Wichita, 87-91, before turning on Oklahoma A. and M., 57-48.

Starters Bear Burden.

Furthermore, the Bengals got all but two of their points out of the starting lineup. They lost three men on fouls. This reflects M. U.'s only apparant weakness at this writing, lack of proven reserve power. Because of the rugged schedule, Coach Sparky Stalcup has not been able to temper his second-liner under fire. Only eight men played in the victories over Iowa and Indiana. And none could fill the scoring breach at Houston when Med Park and Bob Reiter were waived out on fouls. Lloyd Elmore, veteran guard, who could help this situation, is out of action with a knee injury.

Yet, the Tigers retain their No. 1 rating over the field because of their proven varsity, without doubt the finest starting five in the conference, and their 4-2 level against the most wicked slate any tournament team has played.

California gained stature during the past week by twice vanquishing Colorado, defending Big Seven co-champion, and a pre-season favorite close to Missouri, then sweeping a double-header from previously-undefeated Ohio State. All four games were played on the Bears' home court at Berkeley, but Pete Newell's club opened with road triumphs over Oregon State and

Joe Powell, to a starting berth.

Since Powell and Smith took over as regular front-liners, K-State has surged to three consecutive victories over Wyoming, Washington and Indiana. Most significant was the 91-74 thrashing of the defending Big Ten champions. The 17-point spread was fourteen greater than Missouri was able to whip Indiana on its home court. And the 70-50 sack of Wyoming, sixth-place team in the all-College, is the worst on the Cowboys' record to date.

K-State will meet California at 9:45 p. m. Tuesday in what should be the finest of four first-round matches. The Wildcats are seeking their fourth championship, having won the meet more than any other squad.

K. U. Still Unbeaten.

Kansas will bring in the only unbeaten record among tournament teams. Even though its entire 4-0 level has been achieved on its friendly home planks, Phog Allen has started four sophomores in each game and will bring as many as eight into Kansas City on his tournament squad of fifteen. Only stiff foe the Jayhawks have faced is Tulsa, which they subdued, 73-66. The Hurricane placed fourth in the all-College, losing the third-place play-off, 68-73, to O. C. U., in two overtimes.

The defending tourney champions own one returning all-conference selectee, Guard Dallas Dobbs, plus fine bench strength. Dobbs is averaging 18.7 points, third-best on the pre-meet roles.

O. U.'s Lester Lane, one of a handful of seniors who will be playing their fourth tournament, will lead the individual scoring pack into action on a glistening 24.5 average compiled through four games. He is defending tourney point king.

Here are the top fifteen who will go to the post:

	G	FG	FT	PF	TP	Avg.
Lester Lane, g, Ok....	4	31	36	10	98	24.5
C. Duncan, c, I. S....	5	36	22	11	94	18.8
Dallas Dobbs, g, Kas.	4	28	19	7	75	18.7
B. Halderson, c, Colo.	6	40	32	18	112	18.6
Rex Ekwall, f, Neb...	5	31	23	16	85	17.0
G. Thompson, f, I. S.	5	32	20	14	84	16.8
Norm Stewart, f, Mo.	6	32	34	20	98	16.3
Bob Reiter, c, Mo....	6	28	35	22	91	15.2
L. Friend, f, Calif....	8	47	27	22	121	15.1
Jim Smith, f, K. S....	5	17	43	15	77	15.4
Bob McKeen, c, Calif.	8	44	32	18	120	15.0
Med Park, f, Mo....	6	27	30	21	84	14.0
*C. Smith, f, Neb....	4	14	23	10	51	12.7
Lyn Hart, f, Ok.....	4	13	24	7	50	12.5
Gene Elstun, f, Kas.	4	16	20	9	50	12.5

(*Did not play against Alabama).