

big seven tournament preview

For the first time in five years neither of the Sunflower powers, KU, nor Kansas State, will be favored to carry off the Big Seven tournament championship when conference squads converge on Kansas City's Municipal auditorium December 27-30.

Not that the Jayhawkers and Wildcats, who have split the last four tourney titles, will be soft touches. Kansas, in fact, went into the weekend series against Rice at Lawrence, undefeated in two starts. Kansas State was accorded a good chance of levelling its seasonal mark at 2-2 against Washington in Manhattan Saturday night.

The Jayhawks dismantled LSU, 83-58, in their first start, then wrought a mild surprise by outlasting Tulsa, 73-66, in their second start. The Golden Hurricane had come into that one unbeaten in four games. K-State rebounded from road losses to UCLA and Arizona with a 70-50 lathering of towering Wyoming in the Purple's first home start.

But these are ordinary feats in the face of recent Missouri achievements. The Tigers, mounting the best team in Sparky Stalcup's 8-year tenure, absorbed a fearful 49-77 walloping at the hands of Illinois in their opener, but since have vaulted high among the nation's elite. And for good reason. They knocked down Indiana, 63-60, two nights after the clubbing at Urbana. They followed with a 97-94 win over Iowa's Big Ten favorites at Columbia. This was garnished with a 67-56 win over another Western conference foe, Wisconsin, and a victory over Arkansas (fill in score) thus mounting a 4-1 level thru the early going.

MU is riding sixth in the latest AP poll and ninth in the UP.

Stalcup's club is built on solid veterans of proven brilliance. Two of these, Bob Heiter, 6-9 center, and Med Park, 6-2, 201-pound forward, are playing their fourth seasons. The other regulars