

Missouri continues to hold the spotlight this weekend as Big Ten basketball teams, plus California, this year's tournament guest team, dive into their second flurry of pre-meet games.

The Tigers, early favorites for the conference and tournament championship, play their third consecutive highly-regarded Big Ten foe, Iowa, Saturday night in Columbia. Sparky Stalcup's band raised eyebrows in both their first two outings, absorbing a 49-77 thumping at the hands of Illinois last Saturday in Urbana, then rebounding with a 63-60 victory over Indiana on the Hoosiers home court.

Indiana is rated sixth in the latest AP national poll; Illinois 14th. The defeat at Urbana wasn't a surprise, but the enormity of it was. The word is that the Tigers played good enough all-round basketball but simply couldn't get the ball through the twine. They didn't register a field goal until nine meets deep in the first period and shot only 18-percent for the night.

Off that performance they MU was scarcely was accorded a victory chance at Bloomington, altho regarded good enough to make it tight. Nobody thought the Bengals' inherent all-round excellence would allow another debacle. But they weren't prepared for a victory on the Hoosiers' home floor, one of the toughest spots in the land for visiting fives. BUT MU broke thru 11 ties and six lead exchanges for the conquest. If they can blow down Iowa they certainly must be accorded high-ranking in the national polls. The Hawkeyes currently are traveling in fourth place. They'll come into Columbia unbeaten in three games. Nebraska was the latest victim, 61-84, Monday. Iowa previously ran over Washington of St. Louis, 80-61, and Loyola of Chicago, 89-79. Furthermore, it is the Big Ten's ranking pre-season favorite.