

favored

Only Missouri and California, this year's guest team, will not ~~start~~ backlines containing two men under six feet..... or, in the case of Colorado, one under 6-0, and another at that level.

This trend can be traced to three points: 1) The niftier, nimbler little men can bring the ball up quickly and more efficiently ~~again~~ especially against various pressing defenses; 2) The little men can play the front line on defense, against the enemy's smaller men, thus keeping the big players against the ~~back~~ board for rebounding. This serves a dual outlet for the fast break; 3) The advent of increased importance of speed in the game has forced all coaches to ~~employ~~ employ more ~~small~~ small, elusive scooters.

Time was when the league was loaded with towering guards. Fifteen years ago Nebraska floored perhaps the tallest backline tandem the conference ever has seen in Don Fitz and Don ~~Held~~ Held, both 6-4. Missouri had the 6-4 John Lobsiger in its rear defense. Iowa State boasted the 6-5 Carol Schneider. Kansas State carried the 6-3 Larry Beaumont. Since the war ~~Kansas~~ ^{Claude} Claude Houchin, 6-5, of Kansas, and ~~Jim Stange~~ ^{and Bill Hougland, 6-4} and ~~Jim Stange~~ ^{Jim Stange}, ~~center~~ Iowa State's Jim Stange, 6-7, who also played center, have been notable backliners.

In contrast, the tallest guards slated to start in next week's tourney are 6-1 Frank Hess of California and the 6-1½ Lionel Smith of Missouri.

As reflected in Lane's 1953 tournament scoring championship, the shooting shorties are not without imposing credentials. Thru games of December 18, that same Lane leads all tournament scorers with a 24.5 average. This has been accumulated on 98 points in just four games, all of which the Sooners have lost.