

Kansas State, meanwhile, is striving to reel-in the slack caused by Dick Knostman's loss by employing three underclassmen in each start. Jerry Jung, 6-11 Hutchinson project, opened at the pivot, but since has given way to Roger Craft, sinewy 6-7 Garden Cityan. Both are splitting time with Jim Frary, 6-7 sophomore.

Here is the picture of that situation in the scoring column. This trio is averaging 14.4 points per game, exactly seven fewer than Knostman notched last year.

Under the railbirds' microscope more sharply than any other single player will be Bill Johnson, 6-7 Nebraska center. The lean senior holds the most significant individual key to the entire conference race.

With Johnson playing close to his potential, the Cornhuskers would be in a position to bid for the title. For they are physically endowed and suffered only one damaging loss from last year's club in guard Joe Good.

Missouri already has plugged one of its losses, forward Gene Landolt, with a sparkling sophomore, Norman Stewart, 6-4, Shelbyville, Mo., native. However, the Tigers certainly are missing Win Wilfong, all-tournament and all-league guard last year.

Oklahoma's veterans still must fight without a genuine big man, the 6-6 Bob Waller being their tallest regular. However, normal improvement, designed along the usual Bruce Drake lines of nifty ball-handling, passing and shooting, can pitch the Sooners high in the race.