

Big Seven Meet Opens Tonight

BY DICK SNIDER

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KANSAS CITY, MO.—Favorites are as scarce as Orange Bowl tickets as the Big Seven's basketball squads, plus guest team Washington, prepare to tip off the eighth annual pre-season tournament tonight in Municipal Auditorium.

With no outstanding favorite in the field, the affair is rated wide open from the first whistle, which sends Kansas, the defending conference king, against Colorado at 8 p. m. Missouri meets Iowa State in the 9:45 second half of the opening doubleheader.

The other four tourney entries get into the milling Monday night, with lower bracket first-round games. They match Kansas State and Nebraska at 8 p. m., and Oklahoma and Washington at 9:45.

Semifinals are scheduled Tuesday night, and finals Wednesday. Consolation games will be played in afternoon doubleheaders starting Monday.

By force of habit, Kansas and Kansas State will shoulder the favorites' burden, but it's

lighter than in any previous league tournament.

However, these Sunflower State squads have won four of the seven previous meets, and are shaky picks to play in the finals again this time. KU won it all only once—in 1951—but has been a finalist on three other occasions. K-State won in 1947, 1949 and last year, this latest on a 93-87 victory over KU.

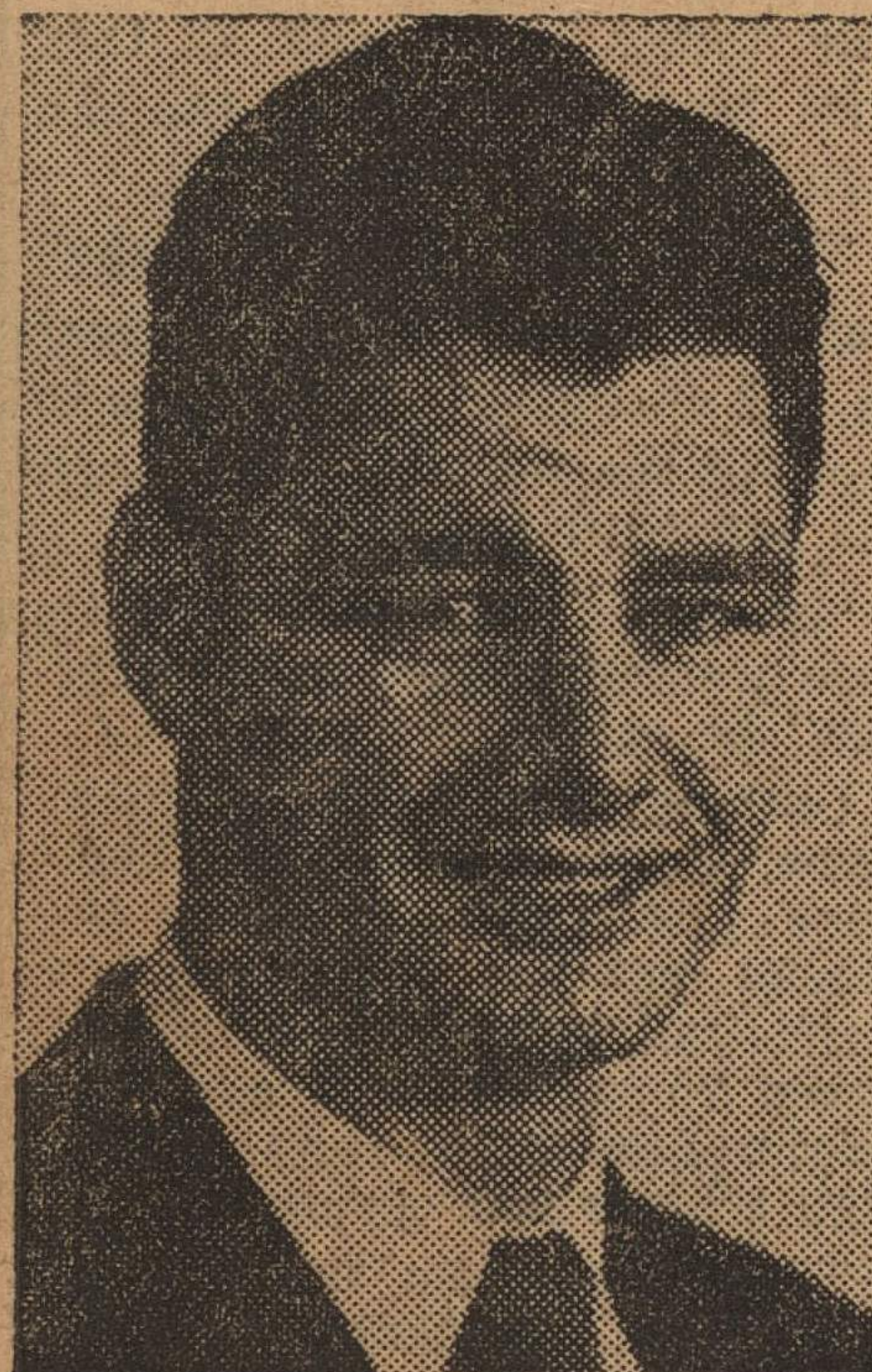
If you're superstitious, your favorite should be Kansas, since no champion ever has repeated.

K-State will pace the best record into the tournament, a 4-1 mark that includes single victories over Denver and Wyoming, a double triumph over Washington, and a whopping 92-66 loss to defending champion Indiana.

Kansas stands at 1-2 on the year, having flogged Tulsa after dropping two games to Tulane and Louisiana State on a season-opening southern tour.

Only one other team, Iowa State, will go into the tourna-

KU, K-State Rated Top Entries



TEX WINTER

... In. tourney debut

ment with a record on the sunny side of .500. The Cyclones have won three and lost one. Missouri is all even at 2-2,

and the rest of the entries lag behind.

Oklahoma and Kansas have won only one game apiece, and Colorado and Washington are winless. The Buffs have dropped five in a row, the Huskies from the Pacific Coast conference four straight—two each to Stanford and Kansas State.

Nebraska, with a 2-4 record, generally is given the best chance to unseat the title-hogging Sunflower squads. The Huskers have shown promise, and will field a veteran squad headed by 6-7 center Bill Johnson and guard Fred Seger.

Oklahoma, which lost all three tourney games it played here last year, also will bear watching. The Sooners also will start a veteran five topped by little Les Lane, southpaw Ron Blue and center Bob Waller.

However, OU's customary lack of height again is a problem. Waller is the tallest Sooner at 6-6, and the replacement line is thin.

Missouri has a big one in

Bob Reiter, 6-8 center, and a promising squad. The Tigers, like Oklahoma and Nebraska, could figure in the title picture.

KU and K-State, despite pressing problems, still rate as the best bets, however. Kansas coach Phog Allen has back towering center B. H. Born and forwards Al Kelley and Harold Patterson from last season's conference champs and NCAA runners-up. But Allen still is looking for guards to match the all-round skill of graduate Gil Reich and Dean Kelley.

State, which lost Dick Knostman by graduation and 6-8 Gary Bergen on a transfer to Utah, has a tender spot at center, and has been experimenting with 6-11 Jerry Jung and a couple of 6-7 hopefuls, Roland Craft and sophomore Jim Frary.

New K-State coach Tex Winter is expected to open with Craft.

Tourney officials say plenty of tickets for the first two nights of action remain. They're priced at \$1, \$2, and \$3, and are available at the auditorium.