

# Tigers ready for 1983 Season

By Jack Denker

When the Missouri Tiger basketball draws up the curtain for the upcoming season on November 26, against North Carolina, it will be missing some of the pizzazz that has carried them to four straight Big Eight Conference championships — the Sundvold & Stipo show.

The Sundvold & Stipo show was a slick basketball act that featured the talents of graduated Tigers Steve Stipanovich and Jon Sundvold. All this talented duo did over the last four years was earn an overall record of 100-28. In the Big Eight, it was 45-11 — with 20 of those victories including a league-record 11 in a row — on the road.

"They were two great players, maybe two of the greatest to ever play here," Missouri assistant coach Kim Ander-

son said. "And to replace them would be extremely difficult. But we are hopeful that we can have some other people come in and do a good job and make the contributions needed for us to be a good team."

Nevertheless, Tiger head coach Norm Stewart said that even without the Sundvold and Stipo show, Missouri can still be a good team this year.

"I think we have a chance to be a good team, but to be as good as last year remains to be seen," Stewart said.

Most of the optimism in Tigerland derives from the fact that Missouri returns three starters from last year's 26-8 team. They are Prince Bridges, a senior guard, James Cavener, a junior forward and Ron Jones, a senior forward.

Cavener, a 6-10 forward, earned rave reviews for his defense and rebounding last season (10.8 pts. and 8.6 re-

bounds per game). But how he will function without Stipanovich in the middle is a major question mark for the Tiger coaching staff at this time.

"I think Cavener will have to look to score a little more since we don't have Stipo any more, but I don't see him role changing that much actually," Anderson said.

Another concern for the Missouri coaches is inexperience. The Tigers have six newcomers this season, which prompted Anderson to call the lack of game experience the team's biggest weakness. Malcolm Thomas, a 6-7 forward from Moberly Junior College and Blake Wortham, a 6-10 center from Miami Northeast A & M Junior College are the most promising rookies, Anderson said.

"All of our new people are going to make some contributions to the team, but some more than others," Anderson

said. "They are all good athletes and we just hope that they can put it together and come around quickly."

Last week, Missouri opened their season with a 110-64 victory over Windsor. In that game, Stewart started the lineup of Thomas and Mark Sparks at forward, Cavener at center plus Bridges and Jones at guard.

Stewart said the strengths of his team in 1983 will be overall team quickness and good jumping ability.

As far as the Big Eight race is concerned, Anderson said there is no real clear cut favorite at this time. He said Nebraska, Kansas, Iowa State, Oklahoma and Colorado and Missouri all look real strong.

"It should be a great race," Anderson said. "I think every team in the league has a legitimate possibility to win it. It should be exciting."

## Drelling . . .

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"It does kind of change your perspective from year to year," Drelling said, "but I think it has helped me out." I like the way Coach Brown has tried to help me develop. He's a very good college basketball coach."

The development that Drelling has gotten since Brown took over for Ted Owens at KU is the thing that was missing from his days at Wichita State.

"I wasn't developing like I wanted to there," he said. "I decided staying at home wasn't for me, either. Even during my year at Wichita, I was visiting friends here. I liked the atmosphere."

Drelling now hopes to lead the Jayhawks to Big Eight Conference championships, but he isn't going to make any rash predictions for this season.

"We're just going to take things day by day," he said. "I like to think we've got a good chance to win the conference, but there are also about four or five other teams that have just as good a chance. We also have a very difficult non-conference schedule, which will make it difficult for us."

Drelling averaged eight points and four rebounds a game for the Shockers his freshman year. The Shockers were considered one of the best teams in the nation that year, but Drelling thinks this year's Kansas squad may be just as good if not better.

"I think the front line at Wichita State may have been a bit better," he said, "but we have a better back court and a better bench this year. If you were able to get those guys from Wichita back and play our team, I guess it would be a pretty good game."

Drelling's own personal goals are about as modest as those he has for the team.

"I'd just like to fit into this kind of system," he said. "I really haven't played this kind of style before. At Wichita State, we played a quick game, but it wasn't the same as this. I just want to be able to play 35 to 40 minutes a game and hit the boards and help out defensively."

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