

Losing season predicted for Kansas State

GREEN from Page 8

Despite his backup role, Sanders rushed for 603 yards on 105 carries last season and was Oklahoma State's leading rusher against Nebraska.

Coach Pat Jones needs replacements in every area of his defense, but has experienced leaders to build upon.

If Jones can repeat or improve on last year's 9-2 mark, the New Year's Day bowl representatives may finally take "that other team from the Big Eight" a little more seriously.

4. Colorado. The Buffaloes return eight starters from an offensive unit that ranked among the nation's top five in rushing offense in 1987, and the five defensive returnees should provide a sturdy foundation for a good team this season.

Coach Bill McCartney, now in his

7th season as the top man in Boulder, set his sights much too high one year ago when he said the Buffs' goal was to play in a Jan. 1 bowl game. A few weeks later, Oregon clouded the dreams with a shocking 10-7 win over Colorado. It's probably a good thing Oregon isn't on the Buffalo schedule in 1988.

The only big obstacle is a Sept. 17 trip to Iowa City to tangle with the Hawkeyes. If Colorado can hold their losses to three or fewer, they too may be headed for a post-season party somewhere warm.

But probably not too warm. Maybe El Paso or Memphis. Maybe.

5. Missouri. Sixteen starters are back for the Tigers and optimism is running high in Columbia. I don't know why.

Missouri's skill players, including quarterback John Stollenwerck, are

back, and so are three Tiger offensive linemen and tight end Tim Bruton, rated by many as the top tight end in college football this year.

Nine starters return to their defensive positions and the kicking game remains intact.

Now, if the Tigers only had a coach... Woody Widenhofer is 9-24 in his three seasons at Missouri and has yet to see a winning season. Last year, he came the closest with a 5-6 mark. The Big Eight schedule and an Oct. 1 trip to Miami will keep the Tigers from being worth a nickel this year, too.

6. Iowa State. Every team is entitled to an off-day now and then. Unfortunately for the Cyclones, their off-days seem to always come on Saturdays.

Don't look for any sudden change in that this season. Coach Jim Walden, a former Nebraska assistant

coach, posted a 3-8 record in his first year and could improve this year with 16 starters back. The starters have a weak non-conference schedule to play, too, but that didn't seem to make any difference last year. It won't this season, either.

Iowa State fans are just going to have to spend the autumn months awaiting the basketball season for a few more years.

7. Kansas. Kansas returns 11 starters from last year's 1-9-1 team. Returning so many starters is the Jayhawks' biggest problem.

Glen Mason takes over the coaching duties this year — poor guy — and he used the word "terrible" more than once after the first spring practice. He'll use it even more every Saturday during the fall.

The only bright spots are receiver Willie Vaughn, tailback Arnold Snell

and defensive back Erick Harper. Other than that, the closest the Jayhawks will come to the national spotlight is on the basketball court.

After all, Kansas is still everyone's favorite homecoming opponent.

8. Kansas State. Ever wonder who the Jayhawks schedule for their homecoming game?

Kansas State is the nation's worst football program in terms of historical win/loss records. The only thing keeping Kansas State out of last place in the conference is 11 weeks. The Wildcats' went 0-10-1 last season and their fans had better be happy with it.

They won't come close to a tie this season.

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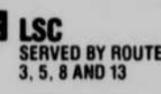
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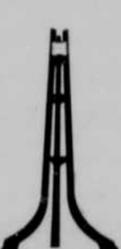
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