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A closer look at the CBE Classic

By Jason King

KANSAS CITY, Mo. -- California, Missouri, Notre Dame and Georgia enter this week's CBE Classic with a combined record of 13-0. But without any head-turning wins on their résumé, it's tough to get a feel for just how good these teams are.

We'll certainly know more after what promises to be an entertaining two nights of basketball at the Sprint Center in Kansas City, beginning at 7:30 ET tonight with Notre Dame-Mizzou and then Cal-UGA. Here are answers to four questions hovering over the teams in this season's field:

How different will Notre Dame look with [Tim Abromaitis](#) in the lineup?

The NCAA forced Abromaitis to sit out the Fighting Irish's first four games because he participated in two exhibitions three seasons ago before redshirting. Notre Dame managed to go 4-0 without its star, although the only quality win was against Detroit. With Abromaitis in the lineup, the Irish should be an upper echelon Big East team. He averaged 15.4 points per game last season and 16.1 ppg in 2009-10.

Has Frank Haith put his stamp on Missouri's program?

It wouldn't be fair to expect the Tigers to be operating in midseason form just three games into the season. But it will be interesting to see how many changes Haith has made to a team that was known for its 40 Minutes of Hell defense under former coach Mike Anderson, who left for Arkansas in the offseason. Undersized Missouri has four guards ([Marcus Denmon](#), [Flip Pressey](#), [Kim English](#) and [Michael Dixon](#)) scoring in double figures, while one big man ([Ricardo Ratliffe](#)) plays more than 12 minutes per game.

Is Cal legit?

The Golden Bears are ranked No. 18 in the new coaches poll -- and some feel that might be too low. [Allen Crabbe](#), [Jorge Gutierrez](#) and [Harper Kamp](#) all played key roles for a team that improved dramatically throughout the course of last season. Minnesota transfer [Justin Cobbs](#) is fitting in nicely, averaging 9.0 points and 4.3 assists in three games. With UCLA in a freefall and Arizona and Washington still trying to work out the kinks, Cal is emerging as a heavy favorite to win the Pac-12 conference.

How does [Kentavious Caldwell-Pope](#) stack up against some of the country's other top freshmen?

The 6-foot-4 Georgia guard is having to adapt to the college level quickly. Caldwell-Pope -- the most highly-touted signee in Mark Fox's tenure -- ranks second on the team in scoring (13.3 points) through three games and is playing 29.7 minutes per contest, partly because one of last season's stars, Travis Leslie, left early for the NBA draft. Georgia is 3-0 after victories against South Dakota State, Bowling Green and Wofford, so Caldwell-Pope's first true tests will come this week.

Predictions

Semifinals

Notre Dame over Missouri

Cal over Georgia

Championship

Cal over Notre Dame