Cleveland State starts the second half of its Horizon League schedule Saturday afternoon at 4 p.m. against Youngstown State in a nationally televised ESPNU broadcast. The Vikings are on a two game winning streak to pull to 9-12 overall and 5-4 in the HL.

Last week's sweep of Green Bay and Milwaukee catapulted the Vikings right back into the race for the two seed in the Horizon League. With Butler running away with the top spot, the remainder of the season seems to be a race to lock down the other double-bye in the tournament.

Butler stayed unbeaten in conference Friday night with a victory on the road at Green Bay. The loss dropped the Phoenix to 7-4 in the HL. With Wright State and Detroit next in line at 6-4, the Vikings are tied in the loss column with the other teams vying for the two-seed and can gain more ground Saturday against struggling Youngstown State.

The Penguins come into the contest at 7-12 overall and 2-8 and in ninth place in the ten-team HL. The Vikings ran YSU out of its own gym in the first contest, a 70-48 CSU victory on January 2nd.

The first meeting was the unveiling of Gary Waters' four-guard lineup. CSU is 5-2 since inserting sophomore guard Jeremy Montgomery into the starting lineup and sliding junior wing D'Aundray Brown to power forward.

Montgomery continued his hot shooting last week against the Wisconsin schools and is now averaging 16.3 points per game in seven games as a starter.

Not to be outdone, junior Norris Cole stepped back into the spotlight against Milwaukee with 22 points and five assists to bring the Vikings back from 14 down in the second half. Included in Cole's game-high point tally was the game winning three pointer with 6.9 seconds on the clock. The memorable game for Cole was also a record breaker as the Dayton native became the 18th player in school history to top the 1,000 career point barrier. Cole continues to lead the Vikings in scoring at 16.5 points per game.

While the Vikings pulled out two wins last week against Green Bay and Milwaukee, YSU dropped both games to the same schools. The Penguins stepped outside the conference this week to snap a four-game losing streak by defeating North Carolina Central. The Penguins other non-conference victories on the season are against the murderers row of Hiram, St. Peters (NJ), Geneva, St. Francis (PA) and High Point.

YSU is led by seniors DeAndre Mays and Sirlester Martin. Both players were JUCO transfers last year and both have stepped up their games as seniors.

Mays, a 6-2 guard out of Dallas, is averaging 13.2 points and three assists per game while Martin, a 6-7 forward out of Memphis, is averaging 12.3 points and a team-high 6.1 rebounds per game.

Martin is an athlete and brings a ton of energy to the floor and can cause problems for the Vikings on the glass. Martin notched 15 points and eight rebounds in the first meeting with the Vikings.

CSU stunned both opponents with the press last week, Green Bay early in jumping out to a 13-2 lead, and Milwaukee late when erasing a double-digit second half deficit.

In the January meeting with YSU, CSU used the same pressing defense quite often and the Penguins did not respond well.

Look for the Vikings to press early and often on Saturday to give the national TV audience an exciting game.