Cleveland State takes the road this week looking to continue a three game winning streak. The road-trip is a short one as the Vikings play two games in Chicago before returning home next week for big matchups with Valparaiso and Butler.

The Vikings (10-12, 6-4) are now a half game out of second place in the Horizon League, although CSU is tied in the loss column with the two teams directly ahead in the standings (Wright State and Detroit at 7-4).

This week's trip takes CSU to Illinois-Chicago on Thursday and Loyola on Saturday. Despite both Chicago schools having disappointing seasons (tenth and eighth place respectively), the trip to Chicago is never an easy one.

The Vikings swept the Chicago trip last season, marking the first time in school history that CSU won at UIC and Loyola in the same season. The Vikings also snapped an eight game losing streak at Loyola in the process.

Thursday 8 p.m. at Illinois-Chicago (5-16, 1-10) on SportsTime Ohio

UIC has lost eight straight to drop into last place in the Horizon League. Despite the losing, the Flames have played well against some of the HL's top teams, including a hard fought 70-63 CSU victory in the team's first meeting on January 9th.

UIC is led by junior Robo Kreps. The 6-foot guard averages 14.1 points per game. Although he entered the season with a reputation as a deadly shooter, Kreps has struggled with a shoulder injury this season and is shooting only 33-percent from the floor and 29-percent from long range. Even with the struggles from deep, the junior continues to find ways to score and gets to the line nearly five times per game where he shoots 85-percent.

The best player for the Flames may be the versatile Jeremy Buttell. The transfer from Texas Tech averages 11.4 points and a team-high 6.8 rebounds per game. The 6-7, 235 pound senior also leads the team in three-point percentage at 33-percent (28-85). Buttell caused problems for the Vikings in the first meeting with a game-high 22 points and eight rebounds.

Saturday 4 p.m. at Loyola (12-9, 3-8)

Loyola has lost four straight and seven-of-eight after starting the season a surprising 11-2. The Ramblers only win in last eight was against struggling UIC.

Loyola was close to knocking off CSU in the first meeting on January 7th as the Ramblers led by three with less than two minutes to play. The Vikings used big plays by Trey Harmon and Norris Cole to close on a 10-2 run and pull out a 62-57 victory.

The Ramblers are led by JUCO transfer Terrence Hill and his 12.0 points per game. The 6-4 guard is shooting 35-percent (29-82) from three to go along with 2.1 assists and 1.0 steal per

game. Thomas recorded a team-high 13 points in first meeting, but was forced into six turnovers.

Senior Andy Polka leads Loyola, and the entire Horizon League, with 8.9 rebounds per game. The 6-7, 240-pound forward doesn't look for his shot often at only 6.5 points per game, but the offense flows through the big man as he is second on the team with 3.2 assists per game.

Loyola boasts two guards that are lights out from beyond the arc in Geoff McCammon and Marcus Thomas. McCammon, a 6-4 junior, starts and averages 9.5 points per game and shoots 46-percent (32-70) from three while Thomas, a 6-2 senior, comes off the bench to average 6.5 points on 42-percent (35-83) from three. The Vikings did a great job shutting down the two shooters in the first meeting as McCammon and Thomas shot a combined 0-5 from the floor, including 0-2 from deep.