It's time for college football again, training camp is over. The Mid-American Conference kicked off last night, but this is your first weekly guide to the action in the Mid-American Conference. Four games were on the slate last night, while on Saturday the rest of the conference is in action. And all games are being televised live.

Akron kicks off the action hosting former MAC member Central Florida at 7:30 on Summa Field at Infocision Stadium. The game will be televised live by ESPN3. UCF is 0-3 against the Zips, and 2-12 when opening on the road. But these aint the same Zips program the Knights had so much trouble with, and the 33 year old Knights program aint the same either. Moving on to Big East next summer, the Knights haven won two Conference USA championships, and are a pre-season Top 25 or Top 40 program. This is also a team that is pissed off, after going 5-7 in C-USA last year and not playing in a bowl. Six of their losses were within a touchdown. A little weak at WR (for a top 40 team), they have a strong running game and a tough secondary. The Zips come in after their famous 2-22 run with HC Ron Ianello with a new coaching staff, new offensive scheme, and a ton of question marks. A large crowd is expected to see the debut of BowdenBall; I hope they don't get discouraged by losing big to a team what was once MAC fodder.

Kent State hosts Towson, an FCS school that went 9-2 and made the playoffs last year. This should actually be a pretty close game with the Golden Flashes, who haven't had a winning record since most of its players were born. I don't want to give away too much from my football preview, but they have one of the better defenses in the MAC and will get past the Tigers in their "warm up" game. This game is also on ESPN3.

Also at 7:00, **Eastern Michigan** visits **Ball State** in the first conference game of the season. This will be a MAC-style shootout with two strong offenses and two bad secondaries. Last year's game featured seven lead changes. The final score should be one Arena Football will be proud of. Ball State leads the series 9-3, and should come out on top. ESPN3 has this game.

At 7:30 **UMass** travels to UConn to rekindle the 115 year old rivalry known as the "U-Game". UMass leads the series 36-33-2. UMass makes the jump to FBS this year and has their work cut out for them after a 5-6 record in FCS. UConn is favored by three touchdowns, I hope it's that close.

Onto Saturday, and the most intriguing game of the week, **Ohio** at Penn State. It goes without saying Penn State has been distracted during the off-season, and has lost several key players to transfers. Ohio comes in as one of the MAC's elite on both sides of the ball, and look to upset the Big Ten team. The Nittany Lions have won all five games against the Bobcats, and ten straight home openers. They are also a team on a mission, using their anger for the transfers and everything else that has happened to the program over the last year, and all of that energy is going to be released on Ohio U. The healing begins Saturday. The game is on ESPN at noon.

Miami travels to Ohio State, and while they are an up-and-coming team, they face a similar opponent as Ohio in the Ohio State. And by all accounts, Urban Meyer is using that as a rallying point for the Buckeyes. The Buckeyes will pounce in their annual MAC warm-up game live on the Big Ten Network.

Western Michigan travels to Illinois looking to upset the Big Ten team. Western Michigan is a deep team, and is 1-3 against the Illini; the two most recent losses were by 3 or less. But the Illini have a strong, veteran secondary and home field advantage. Illinois in a close one. This game is on ESPNU.

Toledo travels to Arizona to take on Rich Rodriguez' Wildcats in the late ESPNU game (10:30 start). Arizona is 3-0 against the Rockets, most recently winning 41-2 in the 2010 opener. This is RIchRod's (120-84-2) first game at AZ, bringing the read-option offense and 3-3-5 odd stack defense in hopes to prop up a weak secondary. An improved Rockets tam should give them a run for it, but the road game that includes jetlag (the game starts at 10:30 Eastern), and their

only game on grass gives Arizona a small edge.

Buffalo (2-6 in the MAC) travels to Georgia to face the #6 Bulldogs. Nuff said. Hopefully the Bulls can at least give them a scrimmage. ESPN3 has this one, for some reason.

Bowling Green travels to #23 Florida, which should actually be more of a scrimmage than the Bulldogs are going to get. Game starts at 3:30 and is on ESPN.

And in the *Game of the Week*, **Northern Illinois** hosts the Iowa Hawkeyes at Soldier Field. NIU is 0-7 against Iowa, but are a different team than the one that lost the 2007 season opener (also at Soldier Field) 16-3 to the Hawkeyes. The Huskies are experienced, and one year into their new coaching staff, while Iowa is neither. The Hawkeyes are especially vulnerable in the secondary, and the defensive front four. I have Northern Illinois pulling off the upset, and you can see if I'm right at 3:30 on ESPNU.