All 12 Mid-American Conference teams will be in action on the final Saturday of January as the regular season moves onward and the teams inch closer to the conference tournament. Four of the six matchups are interdivision rivalries, making Saturday an important day for several of the teams in the conference.

On Wednesday night, there were some interesting results, none more interesting than Northern Illinois's offensive explosion in their road win over Central Michigan. After being held to 34 points by Western Michigan in the previous game, the Huskies nearly had that much at halftime and exploded for 42 points in the second half to beat the Chippewas by 13. The Huskies made 10 of 19 three-point attempts and were aided by 31 free throws attempts, knocking down 22 of them.

In other Wednesday MACtion on the hardwood, Akron gave Toledo their second straight loss in a game televised on SportsTime Ohio with a 71-56 victory in a game that was never very competitive. Ohio took care of their affairs, winning both halves in a 12-point win over Miami of Ohio. Just like last season, Kent State lost on the road at Bowling Green, falling 70-55, marking the fourth time in eight losses that the Flashes were held below 60 points. Western Michigan gave Eastern Michigan a taste of their own medicine from last season, winning a close game by a 63-59 score. Ball State continued their losing ways in the MAC, falling at home to Buffalo by three.

The focus shifts to Saturday's six-pack of action, with the marquee game being played at the appropriately-named MAC Center on the campus of Kent State University. Kent State will try to get back on track against the visiting Ohio Bobcats. Twelve of Ohio's 14 wins have come at home, so this will be a test for the Bobcats against a very desperate team. The Bobcats are rolling offensively right now, averaging just shy of 76 points per game over their last five against MAC competition and are making nearly 50 percent of their shots from the field. Kent State has struggled shooting the rock, connecting at just 37 percent over their last five contests.

These two schools have split the last six meetings, so this should be a very competitive game, especially with Rob Senderoff's bunch chomping at the bit to get back in the win column. The game tips off at 6 p.m. and can be seen on SportsTime Ohio.

The two top teams in the MAC West Division will meet on Saturday as the Western Michigan Broncos take the short trip from Kalamazoo to Mount Pleasant to take on the Central Michigan Chippewas. Western Michigan is the only team in the division with a record above .500 in the conference, as well as in conference play. The Broncos will roll in with a bit of momentum, winners of three straight MAC games, while the Chippewas are coming off an embarrassing loss to cellar dweller Northern Illinois.

Western Michigan had their four-game win streak in this series snapped when Central Michigan eliminated them from the MAC Tournament last season with a 76-70 victory. Revenge will be on the minds of the Broncos players and the Chips will need a strong effort at home to get back to .500 in conference play.

The conference's top dog, the Akron Zips, will host the Buffalo Bulls, who are 2-2 in the second game of back-to-back road games this season. These two opponents have split the last 10 meetings, with the home team winning just six out of 10. Akron has been a very good home team over the last two seasons, covering the spread in 23 of their last 27 home games, and they are generally the favorite at home.

In conference play, the Zips have done it with defense, holding their five MAC opponents to an average of 56.6 points per game. The big matchup to watch in this game will be Buffalo's Javon McCrea against Akron's Zeke Marshall. Marshall, who had nine blocks in the win over Toledo, will have a tough assignment with McCrea, who is very active and is averaging 26 points per game over his last three games.

The second closest geographic rivals in the MAC will meet on Saturday night as the Bowling Green Falcons take the short trip up Interstate 75 to take on the Toledo Rockets. The Falcons are 0-7 in true road games this season, but they've won their last two trips to Savage Hall. If this game comes down to the free throw line, Toledo has a big advantage. The Rockets are tied for fourth in all of college basketball with a 77 percent success rate from the charity stripe. That percentage improves to 82 percent in the five Rockets home games.

The first of two matinee games on Saturday takes place in Ypsilanti at 2 p.m., when Northern Illinois takes on Eastern Michigan. Northern Illinois secured their second conference win of the season with their most impressive game of the season, knocking off Central Michigan and setting a season-high in points scored. Eastern Michigan will be looking for redemption in this game, after the 5-26 Northern Illinois Huskies eliminated them from the MAC Tournament last season. That barnburner was 18-11 at halftime. In MAC play, these two teams are combining for 116 points on the offensive side.

Running alongside the NIU/EMU thriller will be Ball State at Miami of Ohio. The Redhawks have won nine of the last 10 matchups between these two teams, the lone loss coming in overtime. Ball State is off to a terrible start in conference play, losing four straight after starting with a win. The problem for Ball State has been scoring points, as they've shot just 56 percent from the free throw line and are connecting on just 29.2 percent of their three-point shots.

The Redhawks are just 2-3 in conference play, despite playing just one team with a record above .500. In the last 10 matchups against Ball State, Miami has played terrific defense, holding the Cardinals to just 57.1 points per game. It will take a similar defensive effort to get them back to .500 in the conference.