The Mid-American Conference returns to its usual schedule with all 12 teams in action on Wednesday night. The start of the 2013 MAC Basketball Tournament is under a month away, so the push for seeding is on and the teams are looking to build some confidence over the final four weeks of the season.

The Akron Zips certainly aren't lacking confidence, receiving 12 votes in Monday's Associated Press Top 25 poll. The Zips also got nine votes in the USA Today/Coaches' poll. With their 15-game winning streak, the Zips have moved up to 54th in the RPI Rankings, despite playing the 149th toughest schedule in the country. The next highest MAC team is Ohio at 83. Western Michigan is the other MAC team in the top 100 at 96.

As mentioned, the Zips extended the nation's longest winning streak with an ugly 54-50 win over Miami of Ohio on Saturday. The Zips trailed by nine at halftime after a season-low 16 points and had to grind out a second half victory. The Ohio Bobcats kept pace with the Zips in the MAC East Division, downing Bowling Green 72-63. Western Michigan was dealt the lone upset of the weekend, falling to Ball State 65-62 in Muncie. Kent State put together a fine offensive performance, letting out a few weeks worth of frustration on Central Michigan in an 87-72 romp. Toledo held off Eastern Michigan 60-52 to keep the Eagles from getting that elusive first road win. Buffalo and Northern Illinois engaged in a sloppy affair, with the Bulls prevailing 59-54.

With those games in the books, we'll look ahead to the Valentine's Day Eve slate in the MAC. Six games are on tap, five tipping off at 7 p.m. and one at 8 p.m. It looks to be a pretty pedestrian night in the MAC, as no marquee matchups are going to grab headlines, but the talk

of the country is the Akron Zips and their win streak, so we'll start in Ypsilanti, where the Zips take on the Eastern Michigan Eagles.

All 11 of the Eagles' wins have come at home, so the Zips will have to be on high alert. After their showing in Oxford against the Miami of Ohio Redhawks, Keith Dambrot and his bunch know that they cannot take that chance again. The Zips have won eight of the last 10 meetings between these two teams and their lowest margin of victory is five points. The Eagles did win the last matchup at the Convocation Center back on February 2, 2011, so they'll look to do the same here.

The Zips are the first team to start conference play 10-0 since Miami of Ohio did it during the 1983-84 season. While the Zips have been winning, the Eagles have alternated wins and losses over their last six games and have lost six of 10 overall. At home, the Eagles are allowing just 49 points per game, a number that the Zips should exceed, but a pesky Eagles squad could hang around just long enough to pull the upset.

The conference's other top team, the Ohio Bobcats, travels up to Mount Pleasant for a mid-week date with the Central Michigan Chippewas. The Bobcats have bounced back nicely from their loss to Akron 11 days ago, beating Ball State and Bowling Green. The Bobcats have won eight of the last 10, but only three of the last five between these two schools.

The Chips don't appear to be in a good position to pull an upset here. They have lost six straight by 71 combined points. When they have gotten into the 70s on offense, they have given up at least 87 and when they have struggled offensively, they have scored 61 or fewer in those four losses. The last three matchups at McGuirk Arena have ended with two Chippewa wins and a one-point loss, so the Bobcats shouldn't take this game for granted.

Kent State had a chance at falling to .500 in their last game and they responded by scoring 87 points. They'll look to continue their momentum against a Miami Redhawks team coming off a disappointing home loss to Akron. The Golden Flashes are not having the season that they envisioned, but they appear poised to get on track before the MAC Tournament begins. Despite losing three of their last five, the results don't tell the whole story, as the Flashes took the Bobcats to the buzzer in a one-point loss, and have averaged 80 points per game over their last three games.

The Redhawks could be in a rut. After losing on a buzzer-beater three-pointer last Wednesday, they gathered themselves for a low-scoring war with the Zips, which they led most of the game and then lost in the final few minutes. A trip to Kent against a very talented, athletic team could be a tough game for the Redhawks to get up for.

This game will be carried live on SportsTime Ohio at 7 p.m.

The best of the West fell down a peg on Saturday, as the Western Michigan Broncos fell to Ball State 65-62. They'll try to bounce back in a tough place to win, Bowling Green's Stroh Center. The Broncos are just 4-7 on the road, while the Falcons are 7-3 at home. The loss snapped a seven-game win streak for the Broncos and dropped them into a tie with Toledo atop the MAC West Division.

Bowling Green's effort level doesn't show in their record, but they're a tough team to play against. The Falcons are allowing just 55 points per game at home and played right with Ohio in their last game, outrebounding the Bobcats by 10. Western Michigan will have to shake off Saturday's loss to avoid starting a losing streak, as the Falcons should be focused and ready to play. This game means a lot to the Falcons, who are in a three-way tie for third place in the MAC East Division. With the early games of the MAC Tournament being on the higher-seeded team's campus, and a big home/road record disparity with most teams in the MAC, wins are critical.

In a cross-division matchup in Buffalo, the Toledo Rockets make the longest trip of the week to take on the Buffalo Bulls. The Rockets, who are ineligible for postseason play, are playing for the MAC West Division title and they appear to be an inspired bunch, winners of five straight. Free throw shooting remains a key for the Rockets and they have knocked down 79.5 percent of their chances at the charity stripe during their winning streak.

The Bulls are trying to keep their heads above water during MAC play, with a 4-6 record and a lot of inconsistency. The Bulls have played in blowouts and close games so far in conference play and this game should be the latter. Buffalo has won each of the last five matchups in this series by as many as 23 and as few as six. But, this appears to be a different Toledo team and one that goes to Alumni Arena with a lot of confidence.

Northern Illinois hosts Ball State in a battle of two of the conference's worst teams. The Huskies lost their 17th game of the season to Buffalo, failing to break 60 points yet again. The Cardinals upset Western Michigan, so momentum may be on their side. The Cardinals have also won five straight between these two schools, so that's another feather in their cap. This epic matchup is the late game on Wednesday's MAC slate, tipping at 8 p.m.