The Akron Zips and Ohio Bobcats certainly didn't disappoint on the big stage on Wednesday night with a thrilling, back-and-forth game that ended in Akron extending the nation's longest winning streak to 19 with an 88-81 overtime victory. With just three conference games left on the regular season schedule, the Zips are in a great position to claim the outright MAC East Division title and secure the top seed for the MAC Tournament.

Saturday's schedule does not include a marquee matchup like Wednesday night's games, with a focus on seeding for the teams in the middle of the pack. All 12 MAC teams will be in action on Saturday and then have a quicker turnaround than usual, with all 12 teams again taking the court on Tuesday, as opposed to Wednesday. The race is on to secure the fifth seed, because the fifth seed will not have to play the early rounds of the tournament because Toledo is ineligible. The bottom six teams will all have to play to gain a berth in Cleveland.

On Wednesday, as mentioned above, Akron erased an 11-point halftime deficit to defeat Ohio 88-81 in overtime in Athens. Western Michigan put themselves in the driver's seat with a 65-62 win at Toledo to take a one-game lead in the MAC West Division standings and can lock up the MAC West Division outright championship with a win at Eastern Michigan on Saturday. Kent State erased a nine-point halftime deficit at home to down the Buffalo Bulls 83-81 in overtime. Ball State and Central Michigan must have been playing 3-on-3 because they combined for 185 points in the Cardinals' 95-90 win. Bowling Green held Miami to just 13 second half points in a 52-44 victory. Eastern Michigan snagged a road win, downing Northern Illinois 53-41.

Akron holds the top spot in the MAC at 13-0 in conference. After that, the Ohio Bobcats, who are 11-2. Western Michigan is third at 9-4. Kent State, by virtue of head-to-head tiebreakers, is

fourth at 6-7. Bowling Green holds the all-important fifth seed at 6-7, with tiebreakers over Eastern Michigan and Buffalo. Eastern Michigan is sixth at 6-7, with Buffalo seventh at 6-7. Ball State holds sole possession of eighth at 5-8. Northern Illinois holds ninth place at 3-10 due to their win over Miami earlier this season. Miami is 10th at 3-10 and Central Michigan rounds out the standings at 2-11.

None of the teams that are tied at 6-7 in the conference play against each other on Saturday, but some of them certainly have an easier matchup than others. Kent State is in the best position to win this week, taking on a Miami of Ohio team that has won just once since mid-January. While the Redhawks are running on fumes, the Flashes are playing good basketball. Kent State has averaged right around 80 points per game over their last six games. The Redhawks are struggling at both ends of the floor, just a tick above 60 points per game and allowing nearly 70 over their last five.

The Flashes have not won at Millett Hall since 2008 and have lost their last three conference road games. Keep in mind that the second tiebreaker for seeding is a coin flip, so the Flashes will certainly be playing with some extra motivation to try and get that bye into the quarterfinals to set up a semifinal meeting with their biggest rival, the Akron Zips.

The Flashes hammered Miami 87-70 on February 13. They probably shouldn’t expect as big of a blowout here, but the Redhawks are really dragging through the rest of their season and the Flashes have some motivation.

Another 6-7 team, the Bowling Green Falcons should get a stiff test from a frustrated Ohio Bobcats team on Saturday afternoon. The Falcons have defended their home court well, carrying a 10-3 record at the Stroh Center into this game. The Bobcats beat the Falcons 70-63 in Athens on February 9, adding to the home team’s domination in this series. The home team has won nine straight between these two schools.

The Bobcats have lost two in a row for the first time since the first week of December, when they lost to Robert Morris and Memphis. Bowling Green has alternated wins and losses over their last seven games. The Falcons are allowing just 54.7 points per game at home this season and that pesky defense could frustrate the Bobcats, who are already playing with a chip on their shoulder. The Bobcats have struggled against the better teams, losing to Akron twice, beating Kent State once in overtime and once by one point in regulation, and got embarrassed by Belmont on national TV. This looks like a good spot for the Falcons to pick up a big win for the

program.

The Akron Zips will try to avoid a letdown in Western New York when they travel to Buffalo to take on the Bulls. The Bulls have given the Zips fits in the last few seasons, winning four of the seven matchups, and three very close games in that span. The host Zips trailed by six at halftime when these two met last month and eventually won by just four. The Bulls are one of the few teams talented enough down low to match up with Zeke Marshall and Demetrius Treadwell.

Buffalo's Javon McCrea is coming off a triple-double in his last game, with 32 points, 15 rebounds, and eight blocks against Kent State. This is a tough spot for the Zips, coming off an emotional win that took a lot out of them, and the mounting pressure of the winning streak. Add in the national ranking and moving up in the RPI rankings and this is a team that could start playing really tight as the postseason draws near.

West meets East in Michigan as the Broncos travel to Ypsilanti to take on the Eagles. The Broncos can clinch the #3 seed for the MAC Tournament with a win. A Toledo loss to Ball State and a Western Michigan win would also lock up the MAC West Division title. After a couple of road slip-ups against Ball State and Bowling Green, the Broncos are back on track, chalking up three straight victories.

The Eagles continue to be committed to defense. Northern Illinois made just 10 shots from the field in EMU's 53-41 win on Wednesday. The Eagles are playing with some extra motivation in this game as well, hoping to work their way up the MAC standings and secure that fifth seed for the first round bye into the second round.

Ball State travels to Toledo on Saturday afternoon. The Rockets were dealt a big blow last game, losing to Western Michigan at home. For the Rockets, the MAC West Division title was all they really had to play for and now they're a full game behind in the standings with three to play and are 0-2 against WMU this season. The road team has won four of the last five in this series and that bodes well for Ball State, who has won three of their last four away from Muncie.

In Saturday's late game, one of Central Michigan or Northern Illinois will end a lengthy losing streak. The Chippewas have dropped 10 in a row to fall from 9-8 to 9-18 on the season. A home

loss to Northern Illinois started the streak, so a road win over Northern Illinois could end it. The Huskies have lost seven in a row. Central Michigan is one of the country's worst defensive teams, while Huskies are one of the country's worst offensive teams. That makes for a great storyline in what should be a thrilling game.