It will be an angry group of Ohio University Bobcats who head to InfoCision Stadium in Akron for their 3:30 kickoff against Akron Saturday.

Ohio opened the season on a tear, winning its first three games and even making an appearance in the "Others receiving votes" section at the bottom of the Associated Press rankings. OU out-scored its opponents 118-34 in the first three weeks and was a trendy pick to upset Rutgers in Piscataway, N.J. during Week Four of the NCAA season.

The Bobcats were playing well behind a first-year starter at quarterback, sophomore Tyler Tettleton, who proved worthy of Ohio coach Frank Solich's decision to start the season with a sophomore under center by combining to complete 52 of 83 passes for 585 yards, seven touchdowns and one interception in those first three contests.

The Bobcats could not pull off the upset of the Scarlet Knights, losing 38-26. They have been a different football team ever since.

Ohio has lost three of its last four games, with its sole win coming against a 1-6 Kent State team, 17-10. Two weeks ago the Bobcats fell by a point to Buffalo ... then missed a potential game-tying field goal in the final moments of their Homecoming contest against Ball State last weekend.

Once one of the favorites to win the MAC-East and compete in the MAC Championship Game,

the Bobcats at 4-3 overall, 1-2 in the conference are now looking to tread water and get some help from other teams along the way.

Ohio's biggest problem over the last month is easy to identify...the inability to take care of the football. In the Bobcats' four victories they are at plus-7 in turnover ratio. In their four losses they are minus-six. If Ohio takes care of the football it is a very dangerous football team. If not, a team like Akron could easily end up putting another loss on the Bobcats' ledger.

Solich pointed to the turnover story as one of the main reasons for last week's Ball State loss, and knows his team has to take better care of the football.

"We lost three and didn't gain any (turnovers against Ball State)," Solich said. "It was huge in the ballgame. That statistic alone can cause you to lose a ballgame, and that certainly was a huge part of our loss."

The Bobcats are fourth in the conference in scoring, putting up 31.1 points per game, while boasting the second-stingiest defense in the MAC by giving up just 20.4 points per contest. Ohio is second in total offense (435.1 yards per game) and third in team defense (331.4 yards allowed per contest). Despite the numbers, Solich thinks the raw statistics aren't what primarily separates winning teams from losing ones.

The Ball State loss demonstrated what he was talking about.

"It was one of those days where we didn't get the ball to bounce our way," he said. "You've got to play well enough to overcome those...to overcome the bad bounces."

Akron head coach Rob Ianello knows a thing or two about bad bounces. In his second season at the helm of the Zips, his teams have had very few breaks fall their way...winning just one game last year and posting a 1-5 record thus far this season. Despite the losses, Ianello likes the direction of his football team.

"Our team is in a good frame of mind," he said. "Our team is improving; we just have to keep improving every week."

As for the team that will be on the other side of the field Saturday, Ianello has no doubts about what his squad will be facing.

"They are one of the best programs in the East, and certainly in the Mid-American Conference," he said when asked about the Bobcats. "They're a well-coached team. You can tell by watching them on tape that they have been coached by predominantly the same staff for seven years.

"I was impressed with them a year ago when we played them. It wasn't a very competitive ballgame when we played them a year ago, and we're hoping to be much more competitive this year."

Tettleton, the Bobcats quarterback, has caught the eye of Ianello. The sophomore is fifth in the conference in passing yards per game (233.6) and has thrown 15 touchdowns to just four interceptions. Tettleton has also rushed for 206 yards this season and sits third in the conference in total offense (263.0 yards per game). He has also completed 63 percent of his passes.

"Tettleton is really talented, really good. He's a winner," Ianello said. "He throws the ball well and has a tremendous completion percentage. He moves their team."

Solich agrees, and really likes what he has seen from his young quarterback.

"He's having a tremendous season," Solich said. "You've got to like the guy when you look at his statistics, and you've got to like the guy when you get to know him. He's a team leader and everyone in our program looks up to him."

The Zips defense is in the middle of the pack this season at seventh in the conference.

However, one of the top candidates for MAC Defensive Player of the Year, junior linebacker Brian Wagner, patrols the Akron defense. Wagner leads the conference in tackles per game at 13.5.

Solich expects the Zips to give his team a handful.

"It will be a physical football game," Solich said. "They've got a good-sized team that's aggressive. They're a team that's playing better this year and a team that's gaining confidence along the way. Their won-loss record will not point to that, but they are playing better football."

The game will kick off at 3:30 Saturday and be televised on SportsTime Ohio.