

## CSU Looks To Get Back On Track

Written by {ga=neoleo}

Tuesday, January 27 2009 7:00 PM -

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Cleveland State returns home this week after two weeks on the road. The time away was not kind to the Vikings as CSU dropped three straight contests to fall to 13-8, 4-5. After some tough out of conference games, and a brutal start to their Horizon League slate, the schedule softens up a little for the Vikes ... who will set out to improve their seeding for the conference tournament. Ryan Aroney takes a look at Cleveland State's next two games, home contests against Detroit and Wright State.



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The first half of the Horizon League schedule was not an easy draw for CSU. The Vikings started league play by hosting Valparaiso and Butler. Because of a contracted game with West Virginia, the Valpo game had to be moved back from Saturday to Tuesday with Butler scheduled for Thursday. The slight adjustment to the schedule allowed Butler to enter Cleveland with a full week to scout the Vikings, while CSU had only a single day to turn around from the game with Valpo.

The Vikings also played five road contests to only four at home during the first half of the conference season. Two of the home games, Valpo and Butler, were

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played in early December before the conference season got into full swing in January, meaning CSU has played five of its last seven conference games on the road. CSU also lost defensive standout and fourth leading scoring D'Aundray Brown to injury just as the conference schedule started back up and the defense has looked lost and the lineup has been in flux ever since.

Detroit comes to town on Thursday for a 7:30 p.m. tip off at the Wolstein Center. Detroit enters in last place in the Horizon League with a record of 5-14, 0-9 and would seem to be the perfect remedy for the Vikings' losing streak. CSU downed the Titans 53-44 in the first meeting in Detroit.

The Titans are led by Thomas Kennedy and Woody Payne. At least one member of the duo has led Detroit in scoring in 13 consecutive games with Kennedy averaging 11.9 points on the season and Payne chipping in 9.3. Kennedy is coming off a 24 point, 9 rebound performance in a victory over Chicago State.

Payne led the way in the first meeting with CSU with 10 points and 4 assists. J'Nathan Bullock led the Vikings with 12 points and Cedric Jackson added 8 points, 7 rebounds, 4 assists and 2 steals in a team-high 38 minutes.

Wright State comes to Cleveland on Saturday for a 7:30 p.m. tip off at the Wolstein Center. The Raiders handled CSU 71-62 in the first meeting at Wright State. The Vikings were held to 36-percent (20-56) shooting, including a dismal 15-percent (4-27) from three.

Wright State enters the week ranked second in the nation in scoring defense at 54.6 per game and 13th in field goal percentage defense at 37.7 percent. The Raiders are red hot, having won 12 of its last 14 contests to improve to 12-8, 6-3. The only two losses in the last 14 have come at two nationally ranked teams in Wake Forest and Butler.

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Wright State was led by Cory Cooperwood's 15 points in the first meeting. Todd Brown added 13 points and 9 rebounds for the Raiders. CSU was led by J'Nathan Bullock and his 23 points and 9 rebounds. Norris Cole contributed 18 points, all coming in the second half.

Thursday starts the second half of the Horizon League schedule for CSU and it's time for the Vikings to put it all together. If CSU plans to make a run, it has to start now. There is no time to get healthy, no time for freshman to adjust to the college game, and no time for the schedule to even out.

It's time to stop with the excuses and start with the winning.