

## Division races heating up

Written by {ga=mikeperry}

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Points, points everywhere. One thing is for certain, at this point in the Mid-American Conference football season the offenses are clicking just fine. Well, for the most part.

Temple, Ohio, Western Michigan, Kent, Northern Illinois and Toledo all scored 30 points or more to win conference games Saturday as mild weather across the Midwest made for perfect football conditions for Week Seven of the football season. As the MAC division races heat up let's look back at this weekend and see who is in the driver's seat and who is on the outside, looking in.

First, the conference standings. Ohio University moved to 5-3 overall and 4-1 in the MAC with its 34-13 shellacking of Miami in Oxford and now sits a half-game in front of Temple in the East. The Owls (6-2, 3-1) ran all over Buffalo, also on the road, and is tied with Miami (4-4, 3-1) in second. Kent helped itself by traveling to Bowling Green and stifling the Falcons' offense in a 30-6 win. This win moved Kent to 3-4 overall, 2-2 in the conference. Buffalo (2-5, 1-2), Bowling Green (1-7, 0-4) and Akron (0-8, 0-4) are in some trouble in the conference race. In fact, both the Falcons and Zips have already ensured that they will not be bowl eligible.

In the West Northern Illinois kept rolling, winning its fifth straight game to move to 6-2 overall, 4-0 in the conference with its 33-7 win over Central Michigan. Toledo kept pace with a seven-point win over Ball State and is also perfect in the conference at 5-3, 4-0. Western Michigan improved to 3-4, 2-1 with a big win at Akron while Ball State (2-6, 1-3), defending MAC champion Central Michigan (2-6, 1-4) and Eastern Michigan (1-7, 1-3) are almost at the point where they are just playing out the string.

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### ***Ohio 34, Miami 13***

The Bobcats grabbed a share of the MAC East conference lead with a convincing road win over the RedHawks. Ohio forced six Miami turnovers and controlled the ball with its running attack to win its fifth consecutive game.

Miami sophomore quarterback Zac Dysert threw for 332 yards and a pair of touchdowns, but he also threw four interceptions. The RedHawks looked good early, driving 80 yards to a touchdown in the first possession of the contest – with Dysert capping the drive with a 15-yard touchdown pass to Armand Robinson – to take the early 7-0 lead, but the Bobcats scored the game's next 27 points to put it away.

The Bobcats defense, along with forcing the six turnovers, held Miami to just 11 total rushing yards and sacked Dysert five times.

Vince Davidson led the Bobcats ground attack with 103 yards on 17 carries and scored one touchdown, a 56-yard burst through a huge hole opened by left tackle Ryan McGrath and left guard Jon Lechner. Dante Hardin and quarterback Boo Jackson each had a pair of rushing touchdowns for Ohio, with Jackson also completing 10 of 19 passes for 149 yards.

Freshman receiver Nick Harwell was one of the few bright spots for the RedHawks, catching 11 passes for a career-high 219 yards.

Ohio will host Louisiana-Lafayette this Saturday in non-conference action while Miami will travel to Buffalo.

### ***Temple 42, Buffalo 0***

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Temple's sophomore terrific twosome, running backs Bernard Pierce and Matt Brown, each rushed for over 100 yards in the Owls' blowout win in New York. Pierce, last season's MAC Freshman of the Year, carried the ball 23 times for 106 yards and Brown, the diminutive 5-foot-5 speedster, rushed 20 times for 109 yards to become the first pair of Temple running backs to top the 100-yard rushing plateau in the same game since Stacey Mack and Elmarko Jackson turned the trick against Rutgers in 1997.

The win made Temple bowl eligible for the fifth time in school history.

Junior quarterback Mike Gerardi, making his first career start for the Owls, threw for three touchdowns while the Temple defense held Buffalo to less than 100 total yards of offense and recorded its first shutout since clean-sheeting Boston University in 1992.

"Our kids had fun, we played with energy, we played with passion and we played tough," Temple coach Al Golden said. "We got back to our brand (of football) today, which was good. Our kids enjoyed the battle and it's always good to get a road win in this conference."

### ***Western Michigan 56, Akron 10***

The long season for Akron's first-year head coach Rob Ianello continued as Western Michigan put on an offensive clinic on the carpet at InfoCision Stadium in Akron. The Broncos rolled up 519 yards of total offense and scored an eye-popping 28 points in the second quarter to cruise to the easy victory.

WMU sophomore quarterback Alex Carder had a field day picking on the overmatched Zips secondary, completing 17 of 24 passes for 372 yards and five touchdowns. It was the second time this season Carder tossed five touchdown passes, he also connected on five touchdown strikes against Nicholls State.

Senior wideout Juan Nunez earned MAC East offensive player of the week honors by catching six passes for 192 yards and three touchdowns while Jordan White added eight grabs for 168 yards and a pair of scores.

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Carder had 294 passing yards and four touchdown passes in the first half alone.

Nate Burney led the Akron offense with 91 rushing yards on 16 carries while sophomore quarterback Patrick Nicely completed 12 of 24 passes for 120 yards.

Akron will have to regroup quickly as it must travel to Philadelphia to face host Temple this Saturday. Western Michigan will learn a lot about itself this weekend as Chad Spann, Chandler Harnish and Northern Illinois will invade Waldo Stadium.

### ***Kent 30, Bowling Green 6***

One of the elite rushing defenses in the nation was on display again, this time at Doyt Perry Stadium in Bowling Green, as Kent held the Falcons to minus-10 yards rushing in its easy victory.

The Golden Flashes blew the game open with 17 points in the second quarter to take a 27-3 lead at the half and blanked Bowling Green in the second half as the Falcons could not get anything going offensively.

In five second-half possessions Bowling Green turned the ball over twice, punted twice and turned the ball over on downs.

Kent freshman defensive lineman Roosevelt Nix continued his huge season with five tackles, 3.5 tackles for a loss, a pair of sacks and a blocked extra point. Monta Simmons, Cobrani Mixon and Ishmaa'ily Kitchen all added sacks for the Kent defense as well.

In the game Bowling Green mustered just 135 total yards of offense and turned the ball over three times.

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Kent sophomore quarterback Spencer Keith completed 26 of 32 passes for 223 yards and a pair of touchdowns, both to sophomore wide receiver Tyshon Goode, who earned MAC East offensive player of the week honors for his 12 receptions for 158 yards to go with those two scores.

Kent will host Ball State this Saturday while Bowling Green will head to Mt. Pleasant to face off with Central Michigan.

### ***Northern Illinois 33, Central Michigan 7***

Northern Illinois became bowl eligible for the third consecutive season, winning its fifth game in a row to improve to 6-2, 4-0 with a win over Central Michigan.

The Chippewas actually took a 7-3 lead early in the second quarter on an 11-yard touchdown pass from Ryan Radcliff to Kato Poblah, but the Huskies reeled off the game's final 30 points to win going away.

Radcliff struggled under center for Central Michigan, throwing three interceptions and being pulled late in the game in favor of Brandon Fricke, but Fricke was no better as he completed 4 of 8 passes for just 33 yards and also threw a pick.

Senior running back Chad Spann rushed for 101 yards and three touchdowns, Cameron Bell 82 yards on 12 carries and quarterback Chandler Harnish 71 yards on 11 attempts as NIU rolled up 282 rushing yards on 56 carries...a 5-yard per-carry average.

Wide receiver Cody Wilson led the Chippewas offensive attack with 11 receptions for 115 yards. Nick Bellore (14) and Jableel Addae (11) were both in double figures in tackles for CMU.

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Tyrone Clark had two interceptions for the Huskies, who will travel to Western Michigan Saturday. The Chippewas will try to turn things around when they host Bowling Green, also Saturday.

### ***Toledo 31, Ball State 24***

Toledo rallied from a 17-point deficit to remain perfect in MAC play with the win over Ball State at the Glass Bowl.

The Rockets gave up 17 first-quarter points to trail 17-0, but scored 17 of their own in the second quarter to tie the game at the half. Toledo scored single touchdowns in the third and fourth quarters but had to recover an onside kick after a late Ball State touchdown to seal the win.

The Rockets rushed for 249 yards as a team, led by Adonis Thomas' 130 yards on 19 carries.

Toledo will look to remain perfect in the MAC when it travels to Ypsilanti to face Eastern Michigan Saturday while Ball State will travel to Kent.

### ***Virginia 48, Eastern Michigan 21***

The Eagles suffered their seventh loss of the season, falling to Virginia on the road in non-conference action.