



MVC MEN'S BASKETBALL

MISSOURI VALLEY CONFERENCE UPDATE

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2021-22 Standings (thru Sunday, Feb. 13)

Non-Conf: 69-50

	Missouri Valley					Overall Records											
	W	L	Pct.	PF	PA	W	L	Pct.	PF	PA	H	A	N	L10	t25	Stk.	NET
Loyola	10	3	.769	71.0	63.0	19	5	.792	74.2	62.0	11-1	6-2	2-2	7-3	0-1	W 1	27
Missouri State	10	4	.714	74.1	67.2	19	8	.704	77.3	66.9	10-4	7-3	2-1	8-2	1-1	W 2	63
Northern Iowa	10	4	.714	74.1	69.6	14	10	.583	73.1	69.2	8-4	6-4	0-2	7-3	1-1	L 1	110
Bradley	9	5	.643	71.0	63.9	15	11	.577	71.5	64.9	10-2	4-6	1-3	8-2	0-1	W 3	92
Drake	8	5	.615	71.5	69.8	17	9	.654	74.3	67.2	11-3	6-2	0-4	6-4	0-1	L 3	101
Southern Illinois	6	8	.429	60.7	61.3	13	13	.500	63.2	60.7	9-4	3-7	1-2	4-6	0-0	W 1	146
Valparaiso	4	9	.308	68.6	76.5	11	14	.440	71.6	71.4	7-6	2-7	2-1	3-7	0-0	L 2	220
Indiana State	4	9	.308	67.2	72.5	11	14	.440	71.3	70.8	8-4	2-8	1-2	3-7	0-1	W 2	223
Illinois State	4	9	.308	71.8	74.0	11	15	.423	76.3	76.0	10-4	1-9	0-2	3-7	0-1	L 1	200
Evansville	2	11	.154	57.0	70.5	6	18	.250	59.6	68.8	4-7	2-8	0-3	2-8	0-1	L 2	311

MVC Home Games: 40-27

Non-Conf.: 69-50 (H: 48-12; A: 12-16; N: 9-22) vs. Top-25: 2-7 (1-6 non-con.)

Upcoming Schedule

Tuesday, Feb. 15

- *UNI at Illinois State (ESPN+) 7:00 p.m.
- *Indiana St. at Missouri St. (ESPN+) 7:00 p.m.
- *Bradley at Southern Illinois (ESPN+) 7:00 p.m.

Wednesday, Feb. 16

- *Evansville at Drake (ESPN+) 7:00 p.m.
- *Loyola at Valparaiso (MVC TV/ESPN+) 7:00 p.m.

Saturday, Feb. 19

- *S. Illinois at Indiana St. (ESPN3) 12:00 p.m.
- *Valparaiso at Evansville (ESPN3) 1:00 p.m.
- *Illinois State at Bradley (MVC TV/E3) 1:00 p.m.
- *Drake at Loyola (ESPNU/ESPN2) 5:00 p.m.

Sunday, Feb. 20

- *Missouri St. at UNI (ESPNU/ESPN2) 1:00 p.m.

Monday, Feb. 21

- *Indiana State at Drake (ESPN+) 7:00 p.m.
- *Loyola at Illinois State (ESPN+) 7:00 p.m.
- *Evansville at Valparaiso (ESPN+) 7:00 p.m.

*denotes MVC game

MVC Player of the Week



Cooper Neese
Indiana State
6-4, 185, Jr., G
Cloverdale, Ind.
Cloverdale High

Neese put together a massive week on the hardwood helping the Sycamores to a pair of wins. Neese averaged 25 points, 5.3 rebounds and 1.7 assists per game over the week. During the stretch, Neese shot 18-for-21 (85.7 percent) from the free throw line while playing all but one minute – averaging 43 minutes per game. The sharpshooter put up a career high 35 points, six rebounds and five 3-pointers against Evansville in a double overtime win over the Aces – becoming the 14th player in program history to record 35 points or more in a game. A Cloverdale, Ind., native, Neese came back the very next game and scored 28 points to help ISU rally from a 16-point deficit in a win over Illinois State.

MVC Newcomer of the Week



Mikey Howell
Bradley
6-3, 170, Gr., G
San Diego, Calif.
San Marcos High
[UC San Diego]

Howell keyed a 2-0 week for the Bradley basketball team – averaging 13.0 points, 4.0 rebounds and 2.5 assists, while shooting 58.3 percent from the field and 57.1 percent from 3-point range. The transfer scored in double figures for the first time this season with 12 points in a victory over Loyola on Wednesday before following up with season-best totals 14 points and three 3-pointers to go with a game-high four assists in a victory over Drake on Saturday.

Down the Stretch We Come

Two weeks and a total of 23 league games remain in the Missouri Valley Conference men's basketball slate. Just two games separate first place (currently Loyola, 10-3) and fifth place (currently Drake, 8-5). Since the league began playing an 18-game league schedule (in 1991-92), five league teams have finished a season within as few as three games of each other only five times, most recently in 2018-19 when seven MVC teams finished within three games of each other (ranging from 12-6 to 9-9). Only once (in 1991-92) have five MVC teams finished within two games of first place.

Bunched at The Top

Five league teams are bunched at the top of the standings as the MVC heads into the final two weeks of play (two losses separate 1st through 5th place). Below is what each of those five has done against one another.

Team	BU	DU	LUC	MSU	UNI	ALL
Bradley vs.	-	2-0	1-1	0-1	1-1	4-3
Drake vs.	0-2	-	1-0	0-2	1-1	2-5
Loyola vs.	1-1	0-1	-	1-1	1-0	3-3
MSU vs.	1-0	2-0	1-1	-	0-1	4-2
UNI vs.	1-1	1-1	0-1	1-0	-	3-3

Working Overtime

Through games of Feb. 13, Conference schools have combined to play 12 overtime games in league play. The 12 overtime tilts is the most in league play in at least the past 50 years (since 1972-73). The league has played a combined total of 18 overtime games (overall), which matches the most in the past 50 seasons in the MVC.

A total of 30 MVC games (of a total of 67 league games played) have been decided by five points or less (or went into overtime).

Most OT Games in League Play (since 1973)

12 - 2022

10 - 1993
9 - 2017, 2009
8 - 2001, 1988, 1983, 1979
7 - 4 times

Most Total OT Games (full season, since 1973)

18 - 2022, 2017

17 - 2012
16 - 2018, 2015

MVC Team w/Most Total OT Games This Season

6 - Illinois State (4 in MVC play)
6 - Valparaiso (5 in MVC play)
5 - Drake (3 in MVC play)
4 - UNI (all 4 in MVC play)

*NCAA single-season record is 8

MVC in the Metrics

The Missouri Valley Conference is No. 11 in both the KenPom and in the NET (through games of Feb. 13). Four MVC teams (Loyola, Missouri State, Bradley, and Drake) are in the Top 100 in KenPom and three (Loyola, Missouri State, and Bradley) are in the Top 100 of the NET.

Conference	NET	KenPom
Big 12	1	1
Big Ten	2	3
SEC	3	2
Big East	4	4
ACC	5	5
Pac-12	6	6
American	7	8
Mountain West	8	7
WCC	9	9
Atlantic-10	10	10
Missouri Valley	11	11
SoCon	12	12
C-USA	13	13

NET Rankings Leaders

Loyola leads the league in the latest installment of the NET ratings, at No. 27. Last year, three league schools ranked in the Top 100 of the NET and the MVC had four teams in the Top 150. This year, the league currently has six teams rated 150 or better, with three of those in the Top 100.

School	NET	KenPom
Loyola	27	24
Missouri State	63	55
Bradley	92	83
Drake	101	96
UNI	110	102
Southern Illinois	146	140

Home Cooking

Through games of Dec. 5, MVC men's basketball teams had a 25-11 home record in non-conference play. Since then, MVC teams are 23-1 at home to lift the full-season non-conference home record to 48-12. Last season, Valley schools posted a 34-2 home record in non-league games, and the MVC was 55-6 at home the year prior. The league's 40-27 (.571) home record in league play ranks eighth-best among conferences.

Notably, the league's best home record in Conference play since 1975-76 occurred in 1992-93 (69-21, .767).

Best MVC Home Win Pct. (since 1975-76)

.767 (69-21) - 1992-93
.762 (32-10) - 1975-76
.750 (54-18) - 1979-80
.732 (41-15) - 1986-87
.722 (65-25) - 1999-00

Close Calls

Through Feb. 13, the MVC has played 67 Conference games. According to KenPom, the league's 23 one-score (three points or less or overtime game) contests in 67 total league games (34.3%) is second-most in the nation. The MEAC (11 of 31, 35.5%) is the only league ahead of the MVC.

In the past 20 seasons, the league has not had more than 25 (of 90) league games that were one-score/overtime games (27.8%).

Final Margin	1-3	4-5	6-9	>10	OT
67 Games	11	7	13	24	12

3-Point Streak Ends

Indiana State basketball saw its 420-game streak with a 3-pointer come to an end Tuesday night after going 0-for-17 from behind the arc during a 65-56 loss to Evansville. Indiana State's streak was the longest active streak in the Missouri Valley Conference. The last MVC team to fail to make a three-pointer in a game was Missouri State (Feb. 1, 2021), as the Bears went 0-for-10 against Loyola.

Two For 20

Two MVC student-athletes are averaging better than 20.0 points per game. Isaiah Mosley of Missouri State leads the league (20.5), while Antonio Reeves of Illinois State (20.0) is right behind. AJ Green of UNI ranks third at 18.3. The last time the MVC had two players average 20 or more points for an entire season was in 2012-13 (Doug McDermott of Creighton had 23.2; while Colt Ryan of Evansville averaged 20.1.)

Blocking Out

On Tuesday, Feb. 8, neither Indiana State or Evansville corralled an offensive rebound. According to Ken Pomeroy, that hasn't happened in at least the past 25 years. The previous low in that span was a combined two offensive caroms (Columbia at Princeton, 2/18/2006). It is believed the Evansville-Indiana State game marks the first time neither team collected a single offensive rebound since offensive rebounds became an official stat in the early 1990s.

Top-25 History

Loyola earned spots in both the Associated Press (22) and Loyola Ferris Mowers Coaches Poll, powered by USA TODAY Sports (24), on Feb. 17. Loyola's top-25 ranking this year gives the league at least one ranked team in nine of the past 11 seasons. The Ramblers were ranked No. 22 when Missouri State snapped their 30-game win streak at Gentile in January.

Paused

As of Feb. 13, a total of 28 Missouri Valley Conference men's basketball games have been adjusted or canceled. All seven postponed MVC games have been rescheduled.

MVC Games Postponed/Rescheduled: 7/7
Total MVC Games Moved: 7
Regular-Season MVC Games Canceled: 0
Non-Conference Games Canceled/Postponed: 14
Games Not Made Up: 8
Games Added (new opponents): 5
Rescheduled (same opponent/diff. date): 1

Recapping Last Season

The MVC played a full 90-game conference schedule (and was the only Division I league to do so). The MVC had 32 game-date shifts in league play since Christmas and rescheduled 17 games during the process.

Non-Conference Games Permitted: 90
Non-Conference Games Scheduled: 68
Games Cancelled/Added: 25/24
Conference Games Scheduled/Played: 90/90
MVC Games Postponed/Rescheduled: 17/17
Total MVC Games Moved: 32
Regular-Season MVC Games Canceled: 0

Defending the Shot

Since 2010, all but two teams that have led the MVC in FG percentage defense have earned a spot in the NCAA Tournament. (*Loyola was third in the MVC in that statistic in 2018 and represented the league in the NAAs; last year Missouri State led the league and failed to earn a post-season berth.*) Bradley's current 39.4 percent figure leads the MVC and ranks 22nd nationally.

1. Bradley	582-1478	.394
2. Missouri State	649-1569	.414
3. Loyola	546-1318	.414
4. Indiana State	644-1500	.429
5. Drake	612-1417	.432

Young Guns

Two MVC men's basketball coaches rank among the youngest in Division I this season, including Drew Valentine of Loyola (1) and Bryan Mullins of SIU (4).

Drew Valentine, Loyola	05/25/1991
Austin Claunch, Nicholls	11/17/1989
Solomon Bozeman, Ark.-Pine Bluff	12/18/1987
Bryan Mullins, Southern Illinois	01/13/1987
Preston Spradlin, Morehead State	12/30/1986
Greg Paulus, Niagara	07/03/1986

Alma Mater Coaches

Two MVC coaches are leading their alma maters (Dan Muller at Illinois State and Bryan Mullins at Southern Illinois). Two other MVC coaches played at another MVC school (Dana Ford of Missouri State played at Illinois State, and Darian DeVries of Drake played at UNI.) In MVC history, there have been eight head coaches to lead their alma maters.

	as Player	as Coach
Darian DeVries	UNI	Drake
Dana Ford	Illinois State	Missouri State
Dan Muller	Illinois State	Illinois State
Bryan Mullins	S. Illinois	S. Illinois

Jake Now Ranks Third

UNI's Ben Jacobson is the third winningest MVC coach in conference-only games. Henry Iba (Oklahoma State) leads the MVC with 187 conference wins, while former Creighton coach Dana Altman is second with 182, and Jacobson is third with 170 (through Feb. 13).

187 – Henry P. Iba, Oklahoma State (1934-57)
182 – Dana Altman, Creighton (1994-10)
170 – Ben Jacobson, UNI (2006-present)
163 – Eddie Hickey, Creighton/SLU (1935-43; 1946-58)
155 – Barry Hinson, MSU/SIU (1999-08; 2012-19)

New Kids on the Block

Below is a listing of the top three leaders among newcomers in five major categories (through Feb. 13).

SCORING (All Games)

5. Terry Roberts, Bradley	Jr.	15.1
7. Cameron Henry, Indiana St.	Jr.	14.8
13. Tucker DeVries, Drake	Fr.	13.6

REBOUNDING (All Games)

4. Thomas Kithier, Valpo	Sr.	6.8
7. Malevy Leons, Bradley	Jr.	6.0
9. Cameron Henry, Indiana St.	Jr.	5.7

ASSISTS (All Games)

1. Terry Roberts, Bradley	Jr.	4.3
3. Xavier Bledson, Indiana St.	So.	4.1
6. Mark Freeman, Illinois St.	So.	3.8

STEALS (All Games)

2. Terry Roberts, Bradley	Jr.	1.5
9. Xavier Bledson, Indiana St.	So.	1.2
10. Cameron Henry, Indiana St.	Jr.	1.1

THREE POINTERS MADE/GAME (All Games)

7. Jaylen Minnett, Missouri St.	Sr.	2.4
8. Tucker DeVries, Drake	Fr.	2.3
9. Kevion Taylor, Valparaiso	Sr.	2.2

MVC Players of the Week

Player	Newcomer
N15 Antonio Reeves, Illinois St.	Thomas Kithier, Valparaiso
N22 Trae Berhow, UNI	Ryan Schwieger, Loyola
N29 AJ Green, UNI	Antoine Smith Jr., Evansville
D6 Shamar Givance, Evansville	Terry Roberts, Bradley
D13 Isiah Mosley, Missouri State	Ben Coupet Jr., Southern Illinois
D20 AJ Green, UNI	Jaylen Minnett, Missouri State
D27 Terry Roberts, Bradley	Terry Roberts, Bradley
J3 Sy Chatman, Illinois State	Zach Hobbs, Indiana State
J10 Isiah Mosley, Missouri State	Ryan Schwieger, Loyola
J17 Isiah Mosley, Missouri State	Terry Roberts, Bradley
J24 Isiah Mosley, Missouri State	Terry Roberts, Bradley
J31 Rienk Mast, Bradley	Tucker DeVries, Drake
F7 Lucas Williamson, Loyola	Tucker DeVries, Drake
F14 Cooper Neese, Indiana St.	Mikey Howell, Bradley

MVC vs. Other Conferences

Thru Sunday, Feb. 14

Conf.	W-L
America East	1-2
American	1-3
ACC	0-1
Atlantic Sun	3-1
Atlantic 10	4-3
Big East	1-1
Big Ten	0-3
Big 12	0-1
Colonial	3-1
C-USA	5-3
Horizon	3-1
Ivy	0-1
Mid-American	4-6
MEAC	1-1
Mountain West	0-2
Ohio Valley	6-5
Pac-12	2-1
Patriot	1-0
SEC	1-3
Southern	0-1
Southland	0-1
SWAC	6-1
Summit	5-2
Sun Belt	1-2
West Coast	1-3
Western Athletic	5-1
Non Division I	15-0

TOTAL 69-50

Vs. Power Six* 4-10

**ACC, Big Ten, Big 12, Big East, SEC, Pac-12*

Vs. Top 25 W-L

at #7 Purdue (Indiana State)	0-1
at #16 Arkansas (UNI)	0-1
vs. #10 Alabama (Drake)	0-1
vs. #19 Auburn (Loyola)	0-1
at #16 St. Bonaventure (UNI)	1-0
#12 BYU (at Missouri State)	0-1
at #23 Wisconsin (Illinois State)	0-1

TOTAL 1-6

MVC Teams in In-Season Tournaments This Season

Bradley (Paradise Jam)	0-3
Bradley (Sun Bowl Invitational)	2-0
Drake (ESPN Events International)	0-3
Evansville (Gulf Coast Showcase)	0-3
Illinois State (Cancun Challenge)	1-2
Indiana State (Myrtle Beach Invitational)	1-2
Loyola (Bad Boy Mowers Battle 4 Atlantis)	1-2
Missouri State (Naples Invitational)	2-1
UNI (Diamond Head Classic)	0-2
Southern Illinois (Paradise Jam)	1-2
Valparaiso (Nassau Championship)	2-1

TOTALS *10-21

**includes games played at campus sites*



Hitting Their Shots

Loyola has led the league in FG percentage five-straight seasons. No other MVC program since the league began keeping FG percentage records in 1964 had done it more than three-straight seasons. Loyola is doing it again, hitting on 49.0 percent of its shots to lead the MVC and rank No. 11 in the NCAA.

1. Gonzaga (WCC)	53.6
2. South Dakota St. (Summit League)	52.3
3. Purdue (Big Ten)	50.3
4. Kansas (Big 12)	49.7

11. Loyola Chicago (MVC)	49.0
17. Missouri St. (MVC)	48.4

At the Line

As a team, Missouri State leads the MVC with its 79.4 accuracy rate from the stripe - the best on record in the MVC (since 1964). Wichita State, in 1967, holds the league standard, at 78.8. The Bears rank 5th nationally in FT shooting; UNI ranks 9th.

1. Villanova (Big East)	82.9
2. Montana (Big Sky)	80.7
3. Portland (WCC)	80.3
4. Hofstra (CAA)	79.8
5. Missouri St. (MVC)	79.4

9. UNI (MVC)	78.6
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Missouri State's Isiah Mosley leads the league and ranks 3rd nationally in free throw percentage (92.6). Only a handful of MVC players this century have hit at 90 percent or better for an entire season (minimum 2.0 made per game).

1. Foster Loyer, Davidson (Atlantic 10)	94.4
2. Joe Bryant, Norfolk St. (MEAC)	93.4
3. Isiah Mosley, Missouri St. (MVC)	92.6
4. Mason Archambault, USD (Summit)	92.4
5. Marquis Eaton, Arkansas St. (Sun Belt)	91.9

Best Individual FT Pct. in MVC Since 2000

*2004	Blake Ahearn, Missouri State	97.5
*2005	Blake Ahearn, Missouri State	94.7
*2006	Blake Ahearn, Missouri State	93.6
2022	Isiah Mosley, Missouri State	92.6
2007	Blake Ahearn, Missouri State	92.5
2005	Vince Greene, Illinois State	92.0
2020	AJ Green, UNI	91.7
2004	Vince Greene, Illinois State	91.2
2001	C.C. McFall, Wichita State	91.0
2003	Kyle Korver, Creighton	90.8
2010	Clevin Hannah, Wichita State	90.4
2022	AJ Green, UNI	90.1

*denotes NCAA leader that season

Twice for 40

Isiah Mosley of Missouri State is the first MVC player to hit 40 twice in the same season since National Player of the Year Hersey Hawkins of Bradley did it nine times in 1987-88. Notably, since 1974-75 only seven MVC players have accomplished that feat (two did it twice).

MVC Players to Hit 40 2x in Same Year (since 1975)

Isiah Mosley, Missouri State, 2021-22

\$#Hersey Hawkins, Bradley, 1987-88

\$#Xavier McDaniel, Wichita State, 1984-85

Benoit Benjamin, Creighton, 1984-85

\$Lewis Lloyd, Drake, 1980-81 and in 1979-80

\$#Larry Bird, Indiana State, 1978-79 and in 1977-78

\$#Roger Phegley, Bradley, 1976-77

&MVC Hall of Fame; #Number Retired by School

BU .. Bench Points

The Bradley bench has been at its best as of late. BU has scored at least 30 bench points in its last three games - averaging 35.0 per game. Prior to the run, BU had not scored more than 27 bench points in any game - averaging 17.3. Receiving bench scoring has been key to success as Bradley is 11-2 since Nov. 27 with 15 or more points from its reserves but just 3-4 with fewer. Overall, 10 different Braves have scored in double figures this season with Ari Boya, Mikey Howell and Zek Montgomery doing it for the first time during the current three-game run.

DU .. 1,000 Point Club Watch

Drake guards D.J. Wilkins (1,233) and Roman Penn (1,101) joined the 1,000 career point club this season. With at least eight games remaining this year, teammates Garrett Sturtz, Tremell Murphy and Shanquan Hemphill aren't too far behind in joining the elite club. Sturtz has scored 958 points, while Hemphill has 942 points in his collegiate career and Murphy 912 points.

UE .. The Streak is Over

The Streak is Over - It was a total of 4,031 days and a 10-game skid inside the Hulman Center, but UE got over the hump last week, earning its first road win at Indiana State since January 26, 2011. Playing without guard Jawaun Newton, the Aces came together to hold ISU to a season-low 56 points and an 0-for-17 showing from outside. Interestingly enough - if you had invested \$20 in Bitcoin on 1/26/11, it would have been worth \$2.1 billion when UE picked up its next road win over the Sycamores.

Top Performances Last Week

Isiah Mosley, Missouri State - Posted a double-double in a come-from-behind road win at Drake on Wednesday with 14 points and a game-high 11 rebounds. He then racked up a game-high 22 points in Saturday's win over Valpo on 8-of-11 field goals with 6 rebounds.

Lucas Williamson, Loyola - Put up 15.5 points, 4.0 rebounds, 6.0 assists and 1.5 steals as Loyola split a pair of games. He recorded 13 points, five caroms, six assists and a steal at Bradley on February 9 before going for 18 points, three rebounds, six helpers and a pair of thefts, hitting 4 of 8 shots from beyond the arc, in Loyola's 85-58 win vs. UNI.

AJ Green, UNI - Green led the Panthers in scoring with a pair of 20-point performances this past week, including 24 against Southern Illinois and 20 at Loyola. The junior guard shot 8-of-16 from three-point range and 8-of-8 at the free throw line, improving his season free throw percentage to 90.1%, the second highest percentage in the MVC.

Ben Krikke, Valparaiso - Averaged 16.0 points per game over two contests this week, hitting at a 50 percent clip from the field. He also squeezed five rebounds per game, rejected six shots (three per game) and went 6-of-7 from the free-throw line. Krikke's week was highlighted by a 14-point opening half en route to a 20-point output at Missouri State.

Kevion Taylor, Valparaiso - Went 5-of-9 from the 3-point arc and 9-of-9 at the free-throw line this week while scoring 16.0 points per game and pulling down 4.5 rebounds per contest. He swiped five steals and dished out four assists over the two games. Taylor knocked down five 3s on Wednesday at Illinois State en route to a season-high 26 points.

Shamar Givance, Evansville - Averaged 18 points, 6 rebounds, 4.7 assists and 2.0 steals per game. Givance opened the week with a game-high 19 points in Terre Haute. Playing over 38 minutes, he was 7-of-12 from the field with four assists, three rebounds and a pair of steals. Thursday's double overtime game against the Sycamores saw him add 18 points, seven rebounds and three more steals.

Blaise Beauchamp, Evansville - Entering Thursday's game against Indiana State, Blaise Beauchamp 6.0 points per game, but a huge spurt saw him raise his season mark by 1.5 points in a week that saw him post 16.0 points per game. Following a scoreless contest at Indiana State, Beauchamp erupted for 29 points on Thursday.

Chris Knight, Loyola - In two games last week, Knight averaged 12.0 points, 6.5 rebounds, 1.5 assists and 2.0 blocks per game and shot 68.8 percent (11-for-16) from the field.

Tucker DeVries, Drake - Averaged 14.0 points per game, 6.5 rebounds per game and swatted away two shots, picked up three steals and was a perfect 7-for-7 from the free throw line over two games last week. Scored 20 points (7-for-13 shooting) with seven rebounds at Bradley on Saturday (Feb. 12).

Jaylen Minnett, Missouri State - Had back-to-back double-figure scoring games off the bench for Missouri State to help the Bears to a 2-0 week in league play. He racked up 12.5 points per game and dropped in 7 3-pointers in a break-out week for the transfer from IUPUI.

ILS .. Block Party

Illinois State ranks 29th nationally with 5.0 blocks per game. Since the league began tracking team blocked shot averages (1987), only one team has averaged better than 5.0 blocks per game (Wichita State in 2014 had 5.1.) Bradley ranks second in the league at 4.8 per game.

INS .. Good From the Stripe

Indiana State has improved its season average at the free-throw line to 77 percent – good enough for third in the MVC and 22nd nationally. Xavier Bledson leads ISU with an 87.7 percent (57-for-65) free throw percentage while Cooper Neese is shooting 82.5 percent (52-for-63) from the line. Five other Sycamores shoot 70 percent or better from the charity stripe.

LUC .. 20 Something

Loyola needs one more victory to record its 20th win of the season. The Ramblers, who have posted 20 or more victories in each of the last four seasons, have never notched 20 or more wins in five consecutive seasons. First-year head coach Drew Valentine has a chance to equal or better the program record for wins by a first-year coach (23), set by Tom Haggerty in 1945-46. Darian DeVries (Drake) was the last first-year head coach in the MVC to win the regular-season title.

MSU .. Pushing for 20

Missouri State's next victory will solidify a 20-win season for coach Dana Ford's Bears, which would be the program's first since 2013-14. Missouri State has had 29 previous twenty-win teams in its history, including 16 in the Division I era. All 16 previous DI 20-win MSU teams have gone on to play in a postseason tournament – 6 NCAA, 8 NIT, 2 CIT.

UNI .. Panther Mainstay

Tywhon Pickford played his 138th career game on Sunday at Loyola, tying him with Jake Koch (2008-13) and Matt Bohannon (2012-16) for the second most games played in program history. Pickford's next game played will tie him with Marc Sonnen (2008-13) for the most all-time at UNI.

SIU .. Trending

Southern Illinois' Marcus Domask has 25 assists and eight turnovers in the last six games, and Kyler Filewich is averaging 8.0 points and is 19-of-30 (.633) from the field in the last five games.

VALPO .. Rookie Report

With sixth-year senior point guard Trevor Anderson out for the season with a back injury, Valpo has relied upon a pair of freshmen in Preston Ruedinger and Darius DeAveiro at the point guard spot. Ruedinger owns an impressive ratio of 23 assists to five turnovers, while DeAveiro has handed out 47 assists against 20 giveaways. Ruedinger is one of two players in the nation with 20 or more assists and five or fewer turnovers this season, joining Ohio State's Jimmy Sotos. DeAveiro is one of two freshmen in the nation with 45 or more assists and 20 or fewer turnovers, joining Youngstown State's Luke Chicone.

BU .. Braves on a Roll

Bradley is currently in the middle of its hottest stretch in Valley play in years. The Braves have won seven of their last eight conference matchups – the team's best eight-game stretch in MVC play since 2007-08. Defense has been the key as BU has held its foe to 62 points or fewer in six of the eight games – allowing just 53.3 in its current three-game run. Overall, Bradley's 7-1 record is the best in the Valley since Jan. 18.

LUC .. Three-Point Barrage

In an 85-58 victory against UNI on Feb. 13, the Ramblers buried 14 three-point field goals, their third-highest total of the season. It marked the ninth time in 2021-22 that the Maroon and Gold have connected on double-digit treys. Loyola is 14-0 this season when it scores 70 or more points and just 5-5 when it fails to score at least 70 points.

DU .. Penn Breaks Assist Mark

Roman Penn dished out a season-high six assists against Missouri State on Wednesday (Feb. 9) to pass Glenn Martin as the career assists leader in Drake men's basketball program history. Martin had 384 assists from 1984-88.

All-Time Assists Leaders, Drake

1. Roman Penn (2019-present)	389
2. Glenn Martin (1984-88)	384
3. Lonnie Randolph (2001-05)	382
4. Stephfon Butler (1981-85)	378

2021-22 Pre-Season Poll

School (First-Place Votes)	Total
1. Drake (29)	411
2. Loyola (8)	363
3. UNI (6)	354
4. Missouri State	325
5. Southern Illinois	228
6. Bradley	171
7. Valparaiso	151
8. Evansville	148
9. Indiana State	147
10. Illinois State	68

FIRST TEAM

AJ Green, UNI (MVP)
Tyreke Key, Indiana State
Isiah Mosley, Missouri State
Roman Penn, Drake
Gaige Prim, Missouri State

SECOND TEAM

Marcus Domask, Southern Illinois
ShanQuan Hemphill, Drake
Ben Krikke, Valparaiso
Austin Phyfe, UNI
Lucas Williamson, Loyola

THIRD TEAM

Shamar Givance, Evansville
Ja'Shon Henry, Bradley
Lance Jones, Southern Illinois
Rienk Mast, Bradley
Braden Norris, Loyola

MSU .. Hot Shots

The Bears start the week ranked 5th in the country in FT percentage (.794), 12th in 3-point FG percentage (.384), 16th in FG percentage (.484) and 47th in scoring offense (77.3), all of which lead the MVC. The Bears and Davidson are the only teams in the nation to rank in the top 20 nationally in all three shooting categories.

UNI .. Within 20

Austin Phyfe is 20 points away from passing his father Steve on UNI's all-time scoring list. Steve Phyfe, who played for the Panthers from 1987-90 and was part of UNI's first-ever NCAA Tournament team in 1990, scored 912 career points.

VALPO .. 20-20 Vision

Sheldon Edwards leads the Beacons in a pair of defensive categories with 28 steals and 22 rejections. He has a chance to become the first Valpo player to finish a season as the team leader in both steals and blocked shots since Raitis Grafts had 45 steals and 38 blocks during the 1999-2000 season.