12/30/1999 – High-Scoring Wolverines Beat Towson

It wasn't a defensive gem, but the Michigan offense was in high gear Tuesday night (12/28/1999) in a non-conference win over Towson. The final score was 98-84, but it could have easily been a 20-point win. Things got a little sloppy in the last 5:00, and Towson managed to make the score respectable. Towson is a team that we should beat, and we did, but it's not clear that we learned anything in the process.

Once again, the Fab Three Freshmen were among the leaders, but the big star was Leon Jones, who had a perfect shooting evening, going 8 for 8 from the floor (including 3 for 3 from three-point range), and 4 for 4 from the free throw line. That adds up to 23 points, which is a career high for Leon. LaVell Blanchard was right behind him, with 22 points, and Kevin Gaines and Jamal Crawford each pitched in 18 points. It's great to have that kind of balance. Blanchard continued to be the most consistent rebounder on the team, leading the way again with 8 boards.

On the down side, the big men still aren't playing as well as they're capable of playing. Peter Vignier was particularly disappointing, with only 2 points (on free throws) and no rebounds in 6 minutes of action. Josh Asselin had 9 points, mostly on dunks, and 3 rebounds, but he's capable of much more. Chris Young did what he could.

With just one non-conference game remaining (Sunday 01/02/2000 vs. Colorado State), the Wolverines still need to work on some things. Defense is the main thing, but inside post play is also important. The Big Ten is loaded and deep this season, and every game will be a battle. We've got the talent to finish in the top half of the league standings, and get an invitation to The Big Dance in March, but we've got to get the most out of that talent.