**03/02/2000 – Wolverines Beat Iowa To Finish Home Schedule**

The University of Michigan basketball team beat Iowa 87-78 in Crisler Arena on Wednesday (03/01/2000) night, to wrap up their home schedule. It was an ugly game, filled with fouls and bad officiating, but it was an important win. The win gives UM a 2-game winning streak, and 3 wins in the last 4 games. Coming after a brutal 7-game losing streak, any win is a good win. I just wish we could have played Penn State/Northwestern/Iowa/Minnesota at home somewhere in the middle of that brutal 7-game stretch. I think a win in there might have helped prevent a couple of the losses. It was a miserable Big Ten schedule this year.

UM was clearly better than Iowa, and should have won by 20 points or more. The Wolverines built up a 14 point lead at halftime, and extended it to as much as 21 points in the second half. They still lead Iowa by 16 points with 2:45 to go, but Iowa managed to work the old "hit a 3-pointer and foul right away" scheme about as well as you can. It still wasn't enough.

The officiating was *TERRIBLE*. Awful. Ridiculous. Bad, even by Big Ten standards. These guys were inept, clueless, and just plain wrong most of the time. They made bad calls both ways, but mostly against UM. They called at least 10 offensive fouls in the first half, and maybe 2 of them were the correct call. They called an intentional foul on Josh Asselin after he got wrestled to the floor by one of the Iowa players. An Iowa guy tackled Kevin Gaines on a breakaway, and they didn't call it an intentional foul. Leon Jones got hammered to the floor on a layup, and they called it an offensive foul. The list goes on and on.

With all those fouls, there was a lot of free throw shooting, and UM set new school records for free throws attempted (52) and made (38). Several of the Wolverines did a great job from the line, including LaVell Blanchard, who went 8 for 8, Leon Jones, who went 4 for 4, and Kevin Gaines, who went 14 for 18.

Josh Asselin was awesome. He had a game-high 22 points (on 8 for 9 shooting), 8 rebounds, and 5 blocked shots. If he'd played that hard in some of those close losses, they might have been wins. Kevin Gaines was good, but not great. At least he hit his free throws down the stretch. LaVell Blanchard looked pretty good, especially considering how recently he hurt his knee. Once again, Gavin Groninger had a good first half, and a mediocre second half. Chris Young and Leon Jones both chipped in, but Brandon Smith had a rough game, fouling out with 0 points.

Incidentally, Jamal Crawford wasn't sitting on the bench for this game, for the first time during his suspension. I don't know what was up.

One more regular season game, at MSU. Sure, they'll probably blow Michigan away by 25 points, but UM could sneak up on them and surprise them. That would be so cool, but I'm not getting my hopes up.