03/06/2000 – MSU Pummels UM In Regular Season Finale

The University of Michigan Men's Basketball team suffered their worst loss in history Saturday (03/04/2000) afternoon at Michigan State, 114-63. It was an ugly game from start to finish, and UM was badly outmatched. Of course, the ever-classy Spartans didn't run the score up, and that will be remembered by future UM teams, when the tables are turned and UM is back on top, where they belong.

Not all the news is bad. It was still only one loss, in a season that has seen 11 other losses. No one got hurt in the game, UM knocked another game off the 8-game suspension of Jamal Crawford, and UM finished in a tie for 7th place with Iowa, which isn't bad, but not what most people expected at the start of the Big Ten schedule. The Wolverines finished the regular season with a 15-12 record (6-10 in the Big Ten).

Just a few words about the game itself, then on to bigger and better things. All the UM players played hard, and gave it a decent effort, but they got in a hole early, and didn't have the firepower to dig themselves out. No one shot well, except for Josh Asselin, but LaVell Blanchard had a particularly poor shooting day, going 3 for 17. Kevin Gaines (2 for 10) and Gavin Groninger (3 for 10) weren't far behind. It's hard to win when you're that cold.

On to the Big Ten Tournament, then (probably) the NIT. UM plays Penn State on Thursday (03/09/2000), then MSU the next day if they win. If, by some miracle, UM wins 3 games in the Big Ten Tournament, they *might* get a bid to The Big Dance, but I doubt it. I think they'd have to win the whole tournament, and then they'd get the automatic bid. On the other hand, they seem to be a lock for the NIT. If they do accidentally make it to the NCAA Tournament, I suspect they'll lose in the first round, but I think they can win 2 or 3 games (or more) in the NIT. I'd say that the NIT is the best place for them, this year.