02/06/2001 – Week #13 - A Tough Week At Home

It's not only tough to win on the road in the Big Ten, it's tough to win at home, especially when you're playing the #5 and #10 teams in the nation. The Wolverines finally got to play a couple home games, after playing 5 of the first 7 Big Ten games on the road, and they got trounced both times. On Tuesday (01/30/2001), they lost to #5 MSU 91-64, and on Saturday (02/03/2001), they lost to #10 Wisconsin 60-41. These losses leave UM with a record of 9-11, 3-6 in the Big Ten. Thank goodness for Northwestern (0-9), or UM would be in last place.

Both games were blowouts, although the Wolverines hung around for a while in both games. Against MSU, UM played pretty well in the early going, until MSU had their big 24-0 run. That pretty much decided the outcome. It wasn't as bad as the 34-2 run by Duke earlier this season, but it was still bad. If UM could figure out a way to stop these runs, they would stand a much better chance of hanging around until the end of the game, and maybe sneaking out another upset.

A few of the UM players did well against MSU. LaVell Blanchard, Chris Young, and Bernard Robinson Jr. all played pretty well, although Bernard's 4-13 shooting could have been better. Josh Moore finally contributed a little, and he didn't foul out, for a change. The rest of the team didn't help enough:

Maurice Searight	0 points
Gavin Groninger	0 points
Leon Jones	0 points
Josh Asselin	2 points
Avery Queen	5 points

That's 7 points for 5 players. That just won't do.

There was an amazing statistic in this game. In the 1st half, MSU went 15-15 from the free throw line, and UM went 13-14. That's incredible.

The Wisconsin game was a stinker. After the good progress that UM had been making lately, this was a real step backwards. Wisconsin is pretty good, but not as good as UM made them look. They do play good "D", but Michigan still should have been able to score more than 41 points on them.

Once again, it was a Wisconsin run that put the game out of reach. On three straight possessions in the 2nd half, UM came up dry, and Wisconsin scored 3 straight 3-point plays. In less than a minute, a 2-point deficit went up to a 12-point deficit, and the rout was on.

Everyone played in slow motion, except for Bernard Robinson Jr., but he was playing too much one-on-one. He got his points, but he didn't help the team much. LaVell Blanchard had a rare "off" game, but he tried hard. The big guys were lousy:

Josh Asselin	0 points
Josh Moore	1 point
Chris Young	4 points

The other supporting guys were lousy as well:

Maurice Searight	2 points
Leon Jones	3 points
Gavin Groninger	0 points
Avery Queen	0 points

That's 10 points for 7 players. If UM could get a little more scoring balance, it would really help. As it is, their opponents only have to guard a couple of players (Blanchard, Robinson Jr., and Asselin) closely, and they can get help from their players guarding everyone else.

Michigan goes back on the road this week, with a game at Penn State on Wednesday (02/07/2001), then at Indiana on Sunday (02/11/2001). Penn State is tied with UM for 9th place in the Big Ten, so the teams should be pretty evenly matched, but it's tough to win on the road in the Big Ten. Of course, UM did beat Indiana in Ann Arbor last month, so the Hoosiers will be looking for revenge. Maybe UM can sneak out another road victory or two.