11/12/2001 – Week #2 - The End of the Exhibition Season

The University of Michigan men's basketball team played their second and final exhibition game on Sunday (11/11/2001) at home vs. the Nike Elite squad, and lost 79-71. They actually played pretty well, all things considered, but the Nike team was much better than the EA Sports All-Stars team they played and beat last Sunday. In particular, the Nike team had several big center/forwards to choose from, and they did a good job against Michigan's big men. It gave the UM front line some much-needed practice against a good, physical group of players.

The big problems in this game were scoring droughts and rebounding. Nike went on several big runs in the game, including 12-0 and 16-0 runs in the first half. A big reason for those runs was that Michigan didn't get many offensive rebounds during those runs, which, combined with 39% shooting, leads to trouble. The good news is that the Wolverines fought back from decent sized deficits several times to either tie the score, or get within a point or two. The bad news is that the effort to catch up left them too worn out to pull ahead. The score was tied with 4:26 left to play, but UM faded down the stretch.

Just about everyone on the team got a good chance to play, and several players had good games. Chris Young was the leading scorer, with 16 points, and Bernard Robinson Jr. (B-Rob) chipped in 13 points. The only other Wolverine in double figures was freshman Dommanic Ingerson, with 11. Another freshman, Chuck Bailey, played a good game, with 8 points and 9 rebounds. Avery Queen had 9 points, and Gavin Groninger had 8. Young, B-Rob, and Bailey all played hard, and Bernard had several great drives to the hoop that got the team fired up. Ingerson was a little quick to shoot a few times, but showed good court vision, and made some sharp plays. Avery Queen did a good job bringing the ball up the court, and made 3 of UM's 8 three-pointers. Gavin Groninger was a little disappointing, after the fabulous game he had last Sunday. Leon Jones was a major disappointment, with 3 points and no rebounds in 20 minutes of action. Mike Gotfredson and Rotolu Adebiyi both played but didn't score, but I don't expect as much from them. Josh Moore finally got in for 6 minutes of action, and scored 3 points. He looked rusty. The third freshman, Marcus Bennett did not play.

The other big story in this game is the other guy who didn't play: LaVell Blanchard. Apparently, both of his ankles are still bothering him, so he didn't risk it. We still haven't seen UM play with a full team, since B-Rob missed the first game, and LaVell only played for 6 minutes. Hopefully, they'll both be ready for the regular season opener on Friday (11/16/2001) vs. Oakland. I'll be back next week to tell you how it went.

Go Blue!