11/17/2003 – Week #02 – The End of the Exhibition Season

The 2003-2004 UM men's basketball team played its second and final exhibition game of the season on Friday (11/14/2003) against the Fayetteville team from the NBDL (NBA Development League). On paper, this looked like quite a mismatch, in favor of the Fayetteville Patriots, since they were loaded with former college players. In fact, after a few minutes of "feeling each other out", UM exploded with a 12-0 run to turn a 2-point defecit into a 10-point lead. They kept building on the lead for the rest of the game, and won going away, 90-57. It was a very impressive performance, especially for so early in the season.

Michigan had 4 players in double figures, including 3 of the starters. Bernard Robinson, Jr. led all scorers with 18 points, and Lester Abram was right behind him with 16. Courtney Sims was the 3rd starter in double figures, with 10, and Brent Petway scored 13 off the bench, on 5 dunks, a layup, and a free throw. His first dunk was an awesome one-handed windmill dunk on a breakaway, and it really got the crowd and the team excited. Brent is going to be a crowd favorite, since he's probably the best dunker in Michigan history. He's tall, he's fast, and he can jump. He came in 2nd in the state of Georgia in the 100 meter dash, and 3rd in the high jump. He has a 40" vertical jump, and is very graceful. I can't wait to see more of his dunks during the rest of his career.

Back to the scoring: Daniel Horton and Chris Hunter were the other 2 starters, and they both almost hit double figures, with 9 points each. Unfortunately, they both shot pretty poorly to get there. Horton was 2-for-10, and Hunter was 3-for-9. Besides Petway, the other players who scored off the bench were Dion Harris (5 points), J.C. Mathis (5 points), Colin Dill (3 points, on a 3-pointer), and Sherrod Harrell (2 points). Dani Wohl, John Andrews, and Amadou Ba all played, but did not score. Everyone played, except for Graham Brown, who missed another game with his sore ankle.

That's the end of the exhibition season for UM. Besides the 2 games that they played in November, they also played (and won) 3 exhibition games in Canada in October, so they've had plenty of opportunity to play together as a team. They're looking good, and I think they'll do very well this year. "How well?" you might ask. Well, I'll tell you. Here is my annual prediction of the entire schedule. I'm leaving off the scores this year, and just predicting the wins and losses.

DATE	OPPONENT	SITE	WIN/LOSS	RECORD
Fri., Nov. 21	Oakland	Ann Arbor	W	1-0
Wed., Nov. 26	High Point	Ann Arbor	W	2-0
Sun., Nov. 30	Butler	Indianapolis, Ind.	W	3-0
Tue., Dec. 2	North Carolina State	Ann Arbor	W	4-0
Sat., Dec. 6	Vanderbilt	Nashville, Tenn.	W	5-0
Sat., Dec. 13	Bowling Green	Ann Arbor	W	6-0
Sat., Dec. 20	Central Michigan	Ann Arbor	W	7-0
Mon., Dec. 22	Delaware State	Ann Arbor	W	8-0
Sat., Dec. 27	UCLA	Ann Arbor	W	9-0
Tue., Dec. 30	Boston University	Ann Arbor	W	10-0
Sat., Jan. 3	Fairfield	New York, N.Y.	W	11-0
Wed., Jan. 7	Northwestern	Ann Arbor	W	12-0
Sun., Jan. 11	Indiana	Ann Arbor	W	13-0
Sat., Jan. 17	Michigan State	East Lansing, Mich.	L	13-1
Wed., Jan. 21	Wisconsin	Madison, Wis.	L	13-2
Sat., Jan. 24	Penn State	State College, Pa.	W	14-2
Wed., Jan. 28	Iowa	Ann Arbor	W	15-2
Sat., Jan. 31	Illinois	Champaign, Ill.	L	15-3

Sat., Feb. 7	Purdue	Ann Arbor	W	16-3
Wed., Feb. 11	Minnesota	Minneapolis, Minn.	L	16-4
Sat., Feb. 14	Iowa	Iowa City, Iowa	W	17-4
Wed., Feb. 18	Penn State	Ann Arbor	W	18-4
Sun., Feb. 22	Wisconsin	Ann Arbor	W	19-4
Tue., Feb. 24	Michigan State	Ann Arbor	W	20-4
Sun., Feb. 29	Ohio State	Ann Arbor	W	21-4
Mar. 2-3	Indiana	Bloomington, Ind.	L	21-5
Mar. 6-7	Northwestern	Evanston, Ill.	W	22-5
Thu., Mar. 11	Big Ten Tournament - First Round	Indianapolis, Ind.	W	23-5
Fri., Mar. 12	Big Ten Tournament - Quarterfinals	Indianapolis, Ind.	W	24-5
Sat., Mar. 13	Big Ten Tournament - Semifinals	Indianapolis, Ind.	W	25-5
Sun., Mar. 14	Big Ten Tournament - Championship	Indianapolis, Ind.	L	25-6
Mar. 18-19	NCAA Tournament – First Round	TBD	W	26-6
Mar. 20-21	NCAA Tournament – Second Round	TBD	W	27-6
Mar. 25-26	NCAA Tournament – Third Round	TBD	W	28-6
Mar. 27-28	NCAA Tournament – Fourth Round	TBD	L	28-7

Yes, I think they're that good. I think they can win every home game this year, and go 3-5 on the road in the Big Ten. They have the height, the muscle, the speed, the finesse, and the experience to go far. I know they're a young team, but they don't play like it. I've been writing this column for 4 years, and I've been waiting for the chance to predict them to do well. That time is now.

Michigan's next game is their season opener, this Friday (11/21/2003) at 7:00 p.m. in Crisler Arena, against Oakland University. This is a game that Michigan should win handily, and it's a good chance for fans to check them out. Come on out and cheer them on.

Go Blue!