11/15/2004 – Week #02 – The Exhibition Season

The University of Michigan men's basketball team finished its 2-game exhibition season on Wednesday (11/10/2004) with a 67-54 victory over Wayne State. As with the other exhibition game, against Michigan Tech on Sunday (11/07/2004), it was a low-key game, but, once again, the Wolverines did what they had to do to win the game.

For the second game in a row, the spark that got Michigan going was Brent Petway. In the Michigan Tech game, he didn't score any points, although he did grab 5 rebounds, but his biggest contribution was putting some energy into the rest of the team, and the fans, while he was out there. He did it again on Wednesday, but this time he contributed more than just energy: he scored 11 points, including 3 great dunks, and grabbed 15 rebounds, including 6 offensive rebounds. He shot a nice percentage (4-for-7), and he even added a couple nice blocks. On top of the stats, he got the rest of the team fired up, and it really helped.

Petway wasn't one of the starters, however. Three of the starters did pretty well, and the other two did OK. The leading scorer was Daniel Horton, with 17 points, on 4-for-7 shooting. He was 3-for-4 shooting 3-pointers, and 6-for-6 from the free-throw line, and he had more assists (6) than turnovers (4). Lester Abram and Dion Harris both had 14 points, but they didn't shoot very well: Abram was 6-for-14, and Harris was 5-for-14. Harris shot OK from 3-point range (2-for-7), but Abram was 0-for-4. Harris chipped in 5 rebounds and 4 assists. The other two starters, Courtney Sims and Graham Brown, had 7 and 3 points, respectively. They both shot OK (3-for-6 for Sims, and 1-for-2 for Brown), but not often enough.

Among the bench players, I've already mentioned Petway, and only one other bench player scored: Sherrod Harrell had 1 point. Ron Coleman and J.C. Mathis both played, but didn't score.

As a team, Michigan shot fairly well (23-for-54, 42.6%), and outrebounded WSU by 10 (38-28). They committed less turnovers (13-15), and had more assists (16-13). They controlled the game pretty well, and did a good job of not getting flustered when Wayne State threw their kamikaze defense at them. In all, it was a good tune-up, and it helped UM get what they needed from their 2-game exhibition season.

The regular season starts on Monday (11/15/2004, 7:00 p.m.), when Michigan hosts a first round game of the Preseason National Invitation Tournament (NIT) against Binghamton. If Michigan wins on Monday, they'll host a second round game against the winner of the Colorado/College of Charleston game on Wednesday (11/17/2004, 7:00 p.m.). If they can win that game, they'll move on to Madison Square Garden for the Final Four, on Wednesday (11/24/2004) and Friday (11/26/2004). No team has ever won the Postseason NIT and the Preseason NIT in the same calendar year, but UM has a chance to do it. They have a favorable draw in their first 2 games, but they could face Arizona in the semifinals, and Wake Forest in the finals.

Let's take a look at Michigan's entire schedule, along with my predictions for the season. This year, I'm adding a new column to my predictions: my "Out of 10" rating. This is my prediction of how many times Michigan would win, if they played that team 10 times in the same location. The higher this number, the more likely it is that Michigan will win the game. Note that in a few cases I picked Michigan to win a game when I felt that they would win less than 5 out of 10, but I didn't pick them to lose any games that I feel they would win more than half of the games "out of 10".

Date	Opponent	Site	Prediction	Out of 10	Record
Preseason NIT					
11/15 (Mon)	Binghamton	Ann Arbor	W	8	1-0
11/17 (Wed)	Second Round	Ann Arbor	W	6	2-0
11/19 (Fri)	Sacramento State	Ann Arbor	W	9	3-0
Preseason NIT					
11/24 (Wed)	Semifinals	New York, N.Y.	L	3	3-1
11/26 (Fri)	Final/Consolation Game	New York, N.Y.	W	4	4-1
11/30 (Tue)	Georgia Tech	Atlanta, Ga.	L	3	4-2
12/04 (Sat)	Notre Dame	Ann Arbor	W	6	5-2
12/07 (Tue)	High Point	Ann Arbor	W	8	6-2
12/11 (Sat)	South Florida	Ann Arbor	W	8	7-2
12/14 (Tue)	Boston University	Ann Arbor	W	7	8-2
12/18 (Sat)	UCLA	Los Angeles, Calif.	L	4	8-3
12/29 (Wed)	Delaware State	Ann Arbor	W	9	9-3
12/31 (Fri)	North Carolina-Asheville	Ann Arbor	W	7	10-3
01/05 (Wed)	Iowa	Iowa City, Iowa	W	3	11-3 (1-0)
01/08 (Sat)	Fairfield	Ann Arbor	W	8	12-3
01/12 (Wed)	Northwestern	Ann Arbor	W	7	13-3 (2-0)
01/15 (Sat)	Penn State	State College, Pa.	W	7	14-3 (3-0)
01/19 (Wed)	Indiana	Bloomington, Ind.	W	5	15-3 (4-0)
01/22 (Sat)	Wisconsin	Ann Arbor	W	4	16-3 (5-0)
01/27 (Thu)	Michigan State	East Lansing, Mich.	L	2	16-4 (5-1)
01/30 (Sun)	Purdue	West Lafayette, Ind.	L	3	16-5 (5-2)
02/02 (Wed)	Minnesota	Ann Arbor	W	7	17-5 (6-2)
02/05 (Sat)	Ohio State	Columbus, Ohio	W	7	18-5 (7-2)
02/08 (Tue)	Illinois	Ann Arbor	L	3	18-6 (7-3)
02/12 (Sat)	Michigan State	Ann Arbor	W	4	19-6 (8-3)
02/16 (Wed)	Wisconsin	Madison, Wis.	L	2	19-7 (8-4)
02/20 (Sun)	Indiana	Ann Arbor	W	6	20-7 (9-4)
02/23 (Wed)	Penn State	Ann Arbor	W	8	21-7 (10-4)
02/26 (Sat)	Northwestern	Evanston, Ill.	W	6	22-7 (11-4)
03/05 or 03/06	Iowa	Ann Arbor	W	6	23-7 (12-4)
Big Ten Tournament					
03/10 (Thu)	First Round	Chicago, Ill.			
03/11 (Fri)	Quarterfinals	Chicago, Ill.	W	7	24-7
03/12 (Sat)	Semifinals	Chicago, Ill.	W	5	25-7
03/13 (Sun)	Championship Game	Chicago, Ill.	L	4	25-8

Wow. 25 wins, and 12-4 in the Big Ten. That should be good for 2nd or 3rd place in the Big Ten, and a good seed (#4 or #5) in the NCAA Tournament. The tough stretch in the schedule will be starting on January 27th, at MSU, through February 16th, at Wisconsin. I see Michigan going 3-4 during that stretch, and dropping from 1st to 3rd or 4th in the conference race. But, I also see them winning the last 4 Big Ten games, to finish strong.

By the way, this year, we only play Purdue, Minnesota, Ohio State, and Illinois once. The Minnesota and Illinois games are in Crisler, and the other 2 are away. Those 4 games are all clustered together in the middle of the Big Ten schedule, with the other 12 games in mirror-image formation, going in and coming out (Iowa, Northwestern, Penn State, Indiana, Wisconsin, Michigan State, then Michigan State, Wisconsin, Indiana, Penn State, Northwestern, and Iowa). Nice and symmetrical.

This week, Michigan has at least 2 games, possibly 3. They definitely have a game on Monday (11/15/2004), vs. Binghamton, at 7:00 in Crisler Arena. This is the 1st round

Preseason NIT game. If they win that game, they'll have another on Wednesday (11/17/2004), also at 7:00, also in Crisler Arena. The other definite game is on Friday (11/19/2004), vs. Sacramento State, at 7:00 in Crisler Arena. Come on out to see this year's team, and to cheer them on.

Go Blue!