01/03/2005 – Week #09 – The End of the Non-Conference Season (Sort Of)

The Week In Review

Happy New Year, everyone!

Of course, it would have been a happier New Year if the University of Michigan football team had managed to hold off Texas in the Rose Bowl, but it was still a great game. Let's just hope that the University of Michigan men's basketball team can have as successful a season as the football team had.

This past week, the basketball team finally returned to action, after having 11 days off between the UCLA game on 12/18/2004 and the game against Delaware State on 12/29/2004. They came back strong, and won that game handily, 66-48, then they played another good game on New Year's Eve Day (12/31/2004), when they beat UNC-Asheville 75-54. These two wins raise UM's season record to 8-5, which is pretty good, considering the number of injuries they've had.

Speaking of injuries, this week is about when the first of the injured starters could have possibly returned to action, but it doesn't look like it's going to happen for another week or two. The makeshift lineup that Michigan has been using for the last 3-4 weeks is getting better every game, and they looked pretty good against Delaware State and UNC-Asheville.

The Big Picture

While these two wins certainly help, they didn't tell us too much about the team, other than that they're getting more comfortable with the makeshift lineup. The good news is that lots of the former bench players are getting lots of good game experience, and they're getting better every game. The bad news is that the injured starters aren't going to be back as soon as they could have been.

Game Statistics

First, let's look at the shooting statistics from the Delaware State game:

Team	Field goals	3-Pointers	Free throws
Michigan	25-43 (58.1%)	6-12 (50.0%)	10-15 (66.7%)
Delaware State	17-52 (32.7%)	9-21 (42.9%)	5-9 (55.6%)
Advantage	UM	UM	UM

As you can see, UM outshot Delaware State in every category. Michigan's shooting percentage from the floor (58.1%) is fabulous! So is their 3-point shooting percentage (50.0%).

Now, let's look at the non-shooting statistics from the Delaware State game:

Team	Rebounds	Assists	Turnovers	Blocks	Steals
Michigan	38	14	17	7	3
Delaware State	19	10	9	2	10
Advantage	UM	UM	DSU	UM	DSU

These stats aren't nearly as impressive as the shooting stats. The rebounding edge is impressive. Same for the number of blocked shots. However, the turnovers and steals don't look very good.

On to the shooting statistics from the UNC-Asheville game:

Team	Field goals	3-Pointers	Free throws
Michigan	33-56 (58.9%)	2-11 (18.2%)	7-12 (58.3%)
UNC-Asheville	20-47 (42.6%)	6-14 (42.9%)	8-12 (66.7%)
Advantage	UM	UNCA	UNCA

If you thought Michigan's shooting percentage from the floor against Delaware State was fabulous, check out their percentage against UNC-Asheville: 58.9%! Unfortunately, their 3-point shooting percentage was terrible (18.2%), and so was their free-throw shooting percentage (58.3%). Fortunately, they didn't need to shoot these well to win.

Finally, let's look at the non-shooting statistics from the UNC-Asheville game:

Team	Rebounds	Assists	Turnovers	Blocks	Steals
Michigan	30	22	10	1	1
UNC-Asheville	21	9	13	1	2
Advantage	UM	UM	UM	Even	UNCA

These stats are better than the shooting stats. The rebounding edge is nice, and the edge in assists is impressive. The rest of the non-shooting stats are insignificant.

Individual Statistics

Here are the individual stats for the starters this week:

	Field Goals		3-Pointers		Free Throws		Points	
Player	DSU	UNCA	DSU	UNCA	DSU	UNCA	DSU	UNCA
Ron Coleman	4-10	8-14	3-6	1-4	2-2	0-0	13	17
Chris Hunter	6-9	8-12	1-1	1-2	2-4	3-4	15	20
Courtney Sims	7-9	4-5	0-0	0-0	5-7	3-3	19	11
Dion Harris	2-5	5-11	1-3	0-2	1-2	0-0	6	10
John Andrews	3-5	2-7	0-1	0-3	0-0	0-3	6	4
Totals	22-38	27-49	5-11	2-11	10-15	6-10	59	62

As you can see, Coleman, Hunter, and Sims all had big weeks. Look at those shooting percentages for all 3 of them: awesome. Coleman has now scored 13, 13, and 17 points in his last 3 games, and the 17 points he scored against UNC-Asheville was a career-high. Hunter has scored in double-figures for all 6 games that he's started, and been the leading scorer in half of them. Harris and Andrews had decent games, but not nearly as good as the other 3 starters. Harris did have a career-high 8 assists against UNC-Asheville.

Here's how the bench players did this week:

	Field Goals		3-Pointers		Free Throws		Points	
Player	DSU	UNCA	DSU	UNCA	DSU	UNCA	DSU	UNCA
Ashtyn Bell	0-0	0-0	0-0	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0
Sherrod Harrell	1-1	0-0	1-1	0-0	0-0	1-2	3	1

Brent Petway	2-3	4-4	0-0	0-0	0-0	0-0	4	8
J.C. Mathis	0-1	1-2	0-0	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	2
Alex Brzozowicz		0-0		0-0		0-0		0
Amadou Ba		1-1		0-0		0-0		2
Totals	3-5	6-7	1-1	0-0	0-0	1-2	7	13

The bench players were not a big factor this week. Petway continued his strong play off the bench, and he shot well, but he didn't see as much action as he has lately. It should be noted that Brzozowicz got to play in his first career game, and he had an assist. His assist was to Ba, who scored his first career points.

Big Ten Preview

This is almost the end of the non-conference schedule for Michigan, although they do have one more non-conference game scheduled for this Saturday (01/08/2005), against Fairfield. In between, they open their Big Ten schedule on the road at Iowa on Wednesday (01/05/2005). That means that it's time to preview the rest of the Big Ten.

Here's how the Big Ten teams have done so far in non-conference action:

Team	Wins	Losses	Percentage
Illinois	14	0	1.000
Iowa	12	1	0.923
Ohio State	11	2	0.846
Wisconsin	9	2	0.818
Michigan State	8	2	0.800
Minnesota	9	3	0.750
Michigan	8	5	0.615
Northwestern	7	5	0.583
Penn State	6	7	0.462
Indiana	5	6	0.455
Purdue	4	6	0.400

There are a couple of surprises here. First of all, Iowa has done a lot better than expected. Their only loss so far has been to (#11) North Carolina. They've been a couple of ranked teams, and they're off to a great start. The next big surprise is Ohio State. I don't think anyone expected them to be 11-2 at this point. On the negative side, both Indiana and Purdue have much worse records than expected.

Here's a quick look at each of the teams, in alphabetical order:

Illinois (Ranked #1)

Losses: None.
Big wins: At neutral site vs. (#24) Gonzaga (89-72)
At home vs. (#1) Wake Forest (91-73)
At Arkansas (72-60)
At Georgetown (74-59)
At neutral site vs. (#22) Cincinnati (67-45)
Michigan games: In Ann Arbor (Tuesday 02/08/2005)
Notes: Illinois is tall, deep, and experienced. They're currently ranked #1 in the nation, and they deserve it. They've won every game fairly easily, and I expect them to beat Michigan soundly in their one game against the Wolverines.

Indiana

Losses: At home vs. (#9) North Carolina (70-63)
At (#6) Connecticut (74-69)
At home vs. Notre Dame (55-45)
At neutral site vs. (#10) Kentucky (73-58)

Big wins: None.

Michigan games: At Bloomington (Wednesday 01/19/2005)
In Ann Arbor (Sunday 02/20/2005)

Notes: Once again, Indiana is off to a rough start. They were actually at 2-6 just before Christmas, but they've won their last 3 games to climb to 5-6. They've lost to some good teams, but the teams that they've beaten are pretty unimpressive. They don't have much height, but they do have some good experience. I expect UM to beat them twice, but the game in Assembly Hall will be quite a challenge.

Iowa (Ranked #16)

Losses: At neutral site vs. (#11) North Carolina (106-92)

Big wins: At neutral site vs. (#12) Louisville (76-71)
At neutral site vs. (#15) Texas (82-80)
At neutral site vs. Texas Tech (83-53)

Michigan games: At Iowa City (Wednesday 01/05/2005)
In Ann Arbor (Saturday 03/05/2005 or Sunday 03/06/2005)

Notes: Iowa is the surprise team in the Big Ten so far. They have decent height this year, and they've got a lot of experience and leadership. I think Michigan will be able to split with them, with each team winning at home.

Michigan State (Ranked #23)

Losses: At (#10) Duke (81-74)
At George Washington (96-83)

Big wins: At home vs. UCLA (76-64)

Michigan games: At East Lansing (Thursday 01/27/2005)
In Ann Arbor (Saturday 02/12/2005)

Notes: MSU has a solid team, with good height, good depth, and plenty of experience. I expect Michigan to split their games with MSU, winning in Ann Arbor, and losing in East Lansing.

Minnesota

Losses: At neutral site vs. (#19) Alabama (78-72)
At neutral site vs. Oklahoma (67-54)
At home vs. Florida State (70-69)

Big wins: None.

Michigan games: In Ann Arbor (Wednesday 02/02/2005)

Notes: Minnesota is pretty tall, and they have plenty of depth and experience. Their losses are all forgivable. Minnesota is almost unbeatable in their weird old gym, but they have to play Michigan in Ann Arbor this year, and I expect Michigan to beat them.

Northwestern

Losses: At neutral site vs. New Mexico State (64-61)
At neutral site vs. Utah State (64-57)
At Colorado (66-57)
At home vs. (#24) Virginia (48-44)

At Arizona State (90-55)
Big wins: None.
Michigan games: In Ann Arbor (Wednesday 01/12/2005)
At Evanston (Saturday 02/26/2005)
Notes: Northwestern has more height, depth, and experience than usual, but I still expect Michigan to beat them in Ann Arbor and Evanston.

Ohio State
Losses: At neutral site vs. Creighton (65-63)
At Clemson (80-72)
Big wins: At Texas Tech (77-71)
Michigan games: At Columbus (Saturday 02/05/2005)
Notes: They have decent height, good depth, and decent experience. I expect Michigan to beat them in their one game, which is in Columbus.

Penn State
Losses: At neutral site vs. Illinois State (82-73)
At neutral site vs. South Carolina State (63-43)
At Georgetown (66-53)
At home vs. Pittsburgh (84-71)
At home vs. Buffalo (72-70)
At neutral site vs. Valparaiso (69-56)
At home vs. Texas A&M (62-60)
Big wins: None.
Michigan games: At State College (Saturday 01/15/2005)
In Ann Arbor (Wednesday 02/23/2005)
Notes: PSU has decent height this year, with pretty good depth, and decent experience. Still, they find a way to lose to teams like South Carolina State. I expect Michigan to win both games against them.

Purdue
Losses: At Miami (OH) (81-71)
At neutral site vs. Cincinnati (79-59)
At (#16) North Carolina State (60-53)
At home vs. Memphis (62-51)
At home vs. Oklahoma (66-48)
At home vs. Baylor (73-72)
Big wins: None.
Michigan games: At West Lafayette (Sunday 01/30/2005)
Notes: Purdue is way down from last year. They have a lot less height, depth, and experience, and it shows in their record, and who they've lost to. That said, I'm still predicting that Purdue will beat UM in their one matchup, since it's in West Lafayette. Even though Purdue has lost 3 games at home already, Michigan has a tough time playing there.

Wisconsin
Losses: At Pepperdine (75-61)
At Marquette (63-54)
Big wins: At home vs. (#12) Maryland (69-64)
At home vs. (#13) Alabama (76-62)
Michigan games: In Ann Arbor (Saturday 01/22/2005)
At Madison (Wednesday 02/16/2005)

Notes: Wisconsin has good height, good depth, and good experience. They have 2 quality wins against ranked teams, and they're on the verge of being ranked themselves. I expect Michigan to lose to them both times they play them this year.

Here's my prediction for how the Big Ten standings will look at the end of the year:

Team	Wins	Losses
Illinois	14	2
Iowa	13	3
Michigan State	12	4
Wisconsin	11	5
Michigan	10	6
Minnesota	8	8
Ohio State	6	10
Northwestern	5	11
Purdue	4	12
Indiana	3	13
Penn State	2	14

I have very little doubt that Illinois will win the Big Ten championship outright, the only question is how many games they will lose. I can't see them losing more than 2. The battle for 2nd place will be between Iowa, MSU, and Wisconsin.

The Upcoming Week

Michigan begins Big Ten play this week, on road at (#16) Iowa on Wednesday (01/05/2005). They return home for their final non-conference game on Saturday (01/08/2005, 8:00 p.m.) vs. Fairfield. Come on down for the game on Saturday, and cheer on the Wolverines.

Go Blue!