01/10/2005 – Week #10 – Things Are Looking Up

The Week In Review

After a couple weeks of mostly bad news, things are starting to look up for the University of Michigan men's basketball team. The first bit of good news was that they won both games they played this week. On Wednesday (01/05/2005), they beat Iowa in Iowa City, 65-63. Then, on Saturday (01/08/2005), they won their final non-conference game by beating Fairfield, 70-48, in Crisler Arena. The next bit of good news was that Daniel Horton returned to action in the Iowa game, after missing 6 games (since 12/05/2004) with a sprained knee. He's wearing a bulky knee brace, but he appears to be at close to mid-season form. The final bit of good news was that Dani Wohl also returned to action in the Fairfield game, after missing 6 games (since 12/09/2004) with a sprained elbow. While he certainly isn't as important a player as Horton, it was still good news to see the number of available players going up, instead of down. Both of these injured players returned to action earlier than expected.

On the negative side, there were a couple more injuries, but they were both minor. In the Iowa game, Chris Hunter sprained his ankle, and missed the Fairfield game. He should be back in action again soon, possibly this week. In the Fairfield game, Brent Petway injured his shoulder. He said that it popped out of the joint, and he popped it back in again. He also said that this has happened to him several times in the past, and that it's not a big deal. I sure hope so.

Just to catch you up, since the situation keeps changing so quickly, here's the latest injury status:

- Lester Abram – Shoulder surgery. He's lost for the rest of the season.
- Graham Brown – Hernia surgery. He's should be back within the next 2 weeks.
- Chris Hunter – Sprained ankle on 01/05/2005. He should be back within the next week.
- Brent Petway – Sore shoulder on 01/08/2005. He should be back within the next week.

There are several players who are recovering from injuries, and are still not up to 100%:

- Daniel Horton – Recovering from a sprained knee, wearing a knee brace.
- John Andrews – Recovering from a deep contusion of his thigh, and a sore knee.
- Ashtyn Bell – Recovering from a broken nose, no longer wearing a mask.
- Dani Wohl – Recovering from a sprained elbow, wearing an elbow brace.
- Sherrod Harrell – Recovering from a broken nose, no longer wearing a mask.

The Big Picture

These two wins raise UM's season record to 10-5, which is pretty good, considering that they were 6-5 a couple weeks ago (12/19/2004), after the loss at UCLA. It's pretty impressive that they've managed to win their last 4 games with all the injuries they've had.

While the Fairfield win was nice, it was expected. The win at Iowa was very unexpected, and a significant upset. Iowa was ranked #14, and they had a flashy 12-1 record. Michigan played one of the best halves of basketball ever in the 1st half, and managed to hold onto the lead throughout the 2nd half to win the game. True, they blew 14 points of a 15-point lead with 16 minutes to go in the 2nd half, in a 14-0 Iowa run, but they didn't panic, and they slowly built the lead back up to 7 points. This turned out to be enough to win the game. There were several heroes in the Iowa game: Horton came off the bench, and played 26 solid minutes. Petway came off the bench to score a team-high 14 points.

But, the most important points were the 4 straight free throws that Andrews made in the closing moments of the game. He came into the game shooting 57% from the line, but he went 4-for-4 when it mattered.

The win against Iowa is huge for this team. It is really important that they get a good start in the Big Ten, since they have a rough stretch coming up soon (01/22/2005), with 3 tough games in a row: Wisconsin, MSU, Purdue. They get a "breather" for a couple of games, then they hit another rough stretch of 3 games, starting on 02/08/2005: Illinois, MSU, and Wisconsin (again). Here's their remaining schedule:

Date	**Opponent**	**Site**
01/12 (Wed)	Northwestern	Ann Arbor
01/15 (Sat)	Penn State	State College, Pa.
01/19 (Wed)	Indiana	Bloomington, Ind.
01/22 (Sat)	Wisconsin	Ann Arbor
01/27 (Thu)	Michigan State	East Lansing, Mich.
01/30 (Sun)	Purdue	West Lafayette, Ind.
02/02 (Wed)	Minnesota	Ann Arbor
02/05 (Sat)	Ohio State	Columbus, Ohio
02/08 (Tue)	Illinois	Ann Arbor
02/12 (Sat)	Michigan State	Ann Arbor
02/16 (Wed)	Wisconsin	Madison, Wis.
02/20 (Sun)	Indiana	Ann Arbor
02/23 (Wed)	Penn State	Ann Arbor
02/26 (Sat)	Northwestern	Evanston, Ill.
03/05 or 03/06	Iowa	Ann Arbor
Big Ten Tournament		
03/10 (Thu)	First Round	Chicago, Ill.
03/11 (Fri)	Quarterfinals	Chicago, Ill.
03/12 (Sat)	Semifinals	Chicago, Ill.
03/13 (Sun)	Finals	Chicago, Ill.

If they can win at least one game in each of those tough stretches of three games, they'll be in good shape.

Game Statistics

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

Team	Field goals	3-Pointers	Free throws
Michigan	23-50 (46.0%)	7-15 (46.7%)	12-16 (75.0%)
Iowa	22-59 (37.3%)	4-16 (25.0%)	15-21 (71.4%)
Advantage	UM	UM	UM

As you can see, UM outshot Iowa in every category, especially 3-point shooting.

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

Team	Rebounds	Assists	Turnovers	Blocks	Steals
Michigan	40	15	25	5	6
Iowa	28	11	14	6	8
Advantage	UM	UM	Iowa	Iowa	Iowa

These stats aren't nearly as good as the shooting stats, except for the rebounding edge, which is impressive. The turnovers are what kept Iowa in the game.

On to the shooting statistics from the Fairfield game:

Team	Field goals	3-Pointers	Free throws
Michigan	23-43 (53.5%)	9-18 (50.0%)	15-18 (83.3%)
Fairfield	20-56 (35.7%)	2-22 (9.1%)	6-10 (60.0%)
Advantage	UM	UM	UM

Once again, UM dominated in all 3 shooting stats. Look at Fairfield's 3-point shooting percentage: 9.1%. It could be good defense by Michigan, or bad shooting by Fairfield, or both, but in this case, it was mostly good defense.

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

Team	Rebounds	Assists	Turnovers	Blocks	Steals
Michigan	30	15	15	5	7
Fairfield	29	16	16	4	3
Advantage	UM	FU	UM	UM	UM

These stats are incredibly close. It's obvious that the shooting stats tell the story of this game.

Individual Statistics

Once again, Coach Amaker was forced to use 2 different starting lineups this week. When Hunter got hurt in the Iowa game, he started Petway against Fairfield. Here are the individual stats for the starters this week:

Player	Field Goals		3-Pointers		Free Throws		Points	
	Iowa	FU	Iowa	FU	Iowa	FU	Iowa	FU
Ron Coleman	3-6	6-10	2-3	3-7	0-0	3-4	8	18
Chris Hunter	1-5	DNP	0-1	DNP	0-0	DNP	2	DNP
Brent Petway	Bench	3-6	Bench	0-0	Bench	1-2	Bench	7
Courtney Sims	3-9	1-3	0-0	0-0	4-4	2-2	10	4
Dion Harris	4-12	7-13	3-9	5-8	1-2	1-2	12	20
John Andrews	0-0	0-2	0-0	0-1	4-4	2-2	4	2
Totals	11-32	17-34	5-13	8-16	5-6	9-12	36	51

As you can see, Harris was the only starter to have a big week, although Coleman did pretty well. He almost hit double figures against Iowa, and his 18 points against Fairfield were a new career-high. After 6 games in a row in double figures, Hunter finally had an "off" night, which was cut short by his injury. The other starters did an adequate, but not stellar job.

Here's how the bench players did this week:

Player	Field Goals		3-Pointers		Free Throws		Points	
	Iowa	FU	Iowa	FU	Iowa	FU	Iowa	FU
Daniel Horton	5-8	3-4	2-2	1-1	1-3	2-2	13	9
Ashtyn Bell	DNP	0-0	DNP	0-0	DNP	0-0	DNP	0
Sherrod Harrell	0-0	0-1	0-0	0-1	0-0	2-2	0	2
Brent Petway	6-9	Starter	0-0	Starter	2-3	Starter	14	Starter
J.C. Mathis	1-1	3-4	0-0	0-0	0-0	2-2	2	8

Alex Brzozowicz	DNP	0-0	DNP	0-0	DNP	0-0	DNP	0
Dani Wohl	DNP	0-0	DNP	0-0	DNP	0-0	DNP	0
Totals	12-18	6-9	2-2	1-2	3-6	6-6	29	19

The bench players were a big factor this week, especially with Horton coming off the bench in both games. Petway continued his strong play off the bench, and he actually did better coming off the bench against Iowa than he did as a starter against Fairfield. Mathis had another strong game off the bench against Fairfield. These bench points are important, and the bench players will play a key role in any success UM has this year in the Big Ten season.

The Upcoming Week

Michigan returns to Big Ten play this week, at home on Wednesday (01/12/2005, 7:00 p.m.) vs. Northwestern. They go back on the road on Saturday (01/15/2005) at Penn State. I expect them to win both games. Come on down to Crisler Arena for the game on Wednesday, and cheer on the Wolverines.

Go Blue!