01/24/2005 – Week #12 – Down And Out In The Big Ten

The Week In Review

This past week was a terrible week for the University of Michigan men's basketball team. They lost both games they played this week, and they looked pretty bad doing it. On Wednesday (01/19/2005), they lost to Indiana on the road, 62-53. Then, on Saturday (01/22/2005), they lost to (#24) Wisconsin in Crisler Arena, 72-61. They were "flat" in both games, and never really stood much chance of winning either of them. It's not too surprising that they lost to Wisconsin, since they're a Top-25 team, but they really should have been able to beat Indiana, even in Assembly Hall, even though it's been 10 years since UM has won down there. Indiana just isn't that good, but Michigan played a lousy game. They had too many unforced turnovers, especially in the 2nd half. Indiana played a tight defense, and Michigan got rattled, and started making dumb mistakes. Once the momentum swung Indiana's way, the game was over.

Michigan actually played a little better against Wisconsin, but Wisconsin is a lot better than Indiana, so "a little better" isn't good enough. The Wolverines played hard against the Badgers, but they didn't play with poise. Once again, they got rattled in the 2nd half, and lost the momentum, again. As we'll see below, the big problem in this game was rebounds. The other big problem was that they had no answer for Wisconsin's Mike Wilkinson. He scored 28 points, but he could have hit 40, if he had wanted to. Just about every big man that Michigan has took a turn trying to stop him, but no one could.

As if all that wasn't bad enough, Daniel Horton suffered another knee injury, this time to his right knee. He's already wearing a brace on his left knee, and now he hurt the other one. At press time, the extent of this new injury still wasn't known.

The only other injury news this week was "no news". Chris Hunter missed another 2 games, due to his sprained ankle. He is quoted as saying that he expects to play again within a week or so. We shall see.

The Big Picture

These two losses drop UM's season record to 12-7, which is just so-so. They had won 6 in a row overall, and they were 3-0 in the Big Ten, but now they've lost 2 in a row, and they're only 3-2 in the league. To make things even worse, they have 2 more tough games coming up this week: at (#19) MSU on Thursday (01/27/2005), and at Purdue on Sunday (01/30/2005). After that, they get a "breather" for a couple of games (home vs. Minnesota, and at Ohio State), then they hit another rough stretch of 3 games, starting on 02/08/2005: home vs. Illinois, home vs. MSU, and at Wisconsin. Here's their remaining schedule:

Date	Opponent	Site
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.

Somehow, Michigan needs to find a way to win at least one game this week, probably at Purdue, and one of the three games in the next tough stretch. If they can, they'll be in pretty good shape.

Game Statistics

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

Team	Field goals	3-Pointers	Free throws
Michigan	19-49 (38.8%)	4-18 (22.2%)	11-12 (91.7%)
Indiana	18-52 (34.6%)	7-19 (36.8%)	19-28 (67.9%)
Advantage	UM	IU	UM

The shooting stats are deceptive. Michigan actually made more field goals than Indiana, and was only three 3-pointers behind. The percentages are close for those two categories. Then you look at the free throw shooting, and that tells part of the story. Even though Michigan shot free throws very well, they just didn't get to the line that much. Indiana made more free throws than Michigan attempted, and they attempted more than twice as many free throws as Michigan did. There's 8 points right there. With all the size and strength Michigan has up front, they should have gotten to the line a lot more than that.

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

Team	Rebounds	Assists	Turnovers	Blocks	Steals
Michigan	36	9	20	2	6
Indiana	32	12	11	4	4
Advantage	UM	IU	IU	IU	UM

One of these stats tells the rest of the story: turnovers. Turning the ball over 20 times in a game is not acceptable. Sure, Indiana played a frantic, in-your-face defense, especially in the 2nd half, but Michigan got flustered, and started making silly turnovers. That changed the momentum of the game, and it never changed back.

On to the shooting statistics from the Wisconsin game:

Team	Field goals	3-Pointers	Free throws
Michigan	22-60 (36.7%)	5-17 (29.4%)	12-19 (63.2%)
Wisconsin	22-55 (40.0%)	2-10 (20.0%)	26-33 (78.8%)
Advantage	UW	UM	UW

This is really ugly. Both teams made the same number of baskets, and Michigan actually made more 3-pointers. So, they should have won, right? Wrong. Look at the free throws, again. Once again, Michigan's opponent made more free throws than Michigan attempted. At least in the Indiana loss, Michigan shot their free throws well, but 63.2% is pretty bad. Wisconsin outscored Michigan by 14 points from the free throw line, which more than explains the difference in the score. The Badgers were a little too quick for Michigan, and

they were always half a step ahead of them. When Michigan tried to stop them, they often fouled them.

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

Team	Rebounds	Assists	Turnovers	Blocks	Steals
Michigan	32	12	10	9	6
Wisconsin	47	10	14	1	4
Advantage	UW	UM	UM	UM	UM

Other than the huge rebounding edge for Wisconsin, Michigan won the battle of the stats, but the rebounding stats tell the rest of the story. The good news for Michigan was that they didn't turn the ball over as much as they did against Indiana, and their 9 blocked shots were amazing. However, those 15 extra possessions for Wisconsin made all the difference.

Individual Statistics

Now that Graham Brown is recovered enough from his hernia surgery to start again, Coach Amaker finally has his regular starting lineup back in place, with Ron Coleman as the permanent replacement for Lester Abram, who is lost for the season.

Here are the individual stats for the starters this week:

	Field Goals		3-Pointers		Free Throws		Points	
Player	IU	UW	IU	UW	IU	UW	IU	UW
Ron Coleman	1-8	2-6	1-7	0-2	0-0	2-2	3	6
Graham Brown	4-4	0-2	0-0	0-0	0-0	0-0	8	0
Courtney Sims	3-6	4-8	0-0	0-0	0-0	2-2	6	10
Daniel Horton	2-9	6-19	0-4	2-6	7-8	2-6	11	16
Dion Harris	4-12	5-16	3-7	2-7	0-0	4-6	11	16
Totals	14-39	17-31	4-18	4-15	7-8	10-16	39	48

Horton and Harris were the only starters to hit double figures in both games, with identical totals of 11 and 16. However, they both shot terribly in both games. It was also very disappointing to see Horton shoot 2-for-6 from the free throw line against Wisconsin, since he's normally a very steady free throw shooter. Speaking of free throws, look at the stats for the Indiana game: Horton was the only starter to get to the line. That's sad.

Brown actually had a pretty good game against Indiana, but he vanished against Wisconsin. He couldn't handle Wilkinson on defense, and he only got 2 shots off, both misses. Sims had better-looking numbers in both games, but he played way too "soft". He couldn't handle Wilkinson either, and he should be getting to the line a lot more. Coleman had a bad shooting week, especially against Indiana. The team has come to depend on him for some timely scoring, especially from 3-point range, and when he kept missing, the game got out of hand.

Here's how the bench players did this week:

	Field Goals		3-Pointers		Free Throws		Points	
Player	IU	UW	IU	UW	IU	UW	IU	UW
John Andrews	0-1	1-2	0-0	1-2	2-2	0-0	2	3
Dani Wohl	DNP	0-0	DNP	0-0	DNP	0-0	DNP	0

Sherrod Harrell	0-0	0-0	0-0	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0
Brent Petway	5-9	4-7	0-0	0-0	2-2	2-3	12	10
J.C. Mathis	0-0	DNP	0-0	DNP	0-0	DNP	0	DNP
Totals	5-10	5-9	0-0	1-2	4-4	2-3	14	13

With one notable exception, the bench players weren't a big factor this week. That one exception is Petway. He probably had the best week of any of the players, since he shot a good percentage in both games, and had a couple awesome blocked shots against Wisconsin. He also had a double-double (10 points and 10 rebounds) against Wisconsin. As always, when he was out on the floor he brought the energy level of the whole team up. Unfortunately, it wasn't quite enough, but he tried his hardest.

The Upcoming Week

As I mentioned above, Michigan plays two more Big Ten games this week, both on the road. On Thursday (01/27/2005) they play at (#19) MSU, and on Sunday (01/30/2005) they play at Purdue. These are both tough places to play, and given the way Michigan has been playing lately, I don't give them much hope in either game. They might be able to sneak out a win at Purdue, but the game in East Lansing looks pretty hopeless.