03/14/2005 – Week #19 – Season Over: One And Done

The Week In Review

The season is over for the University of Michigan men's basketball team. They lost their 1st round game in the Big Ten Tournament, and that's it for them. On Thursday (03/10/2005), they lost to Northwestern, 58-56, to end the season with a very disappointing 13-18 record.

As with the Iowa game last week, the Northwestern game was very exciting, but it was still another loss. Michigan led for the whole 1st half, and they were up 26-20 at halftime. They lost the lead after halftime, but got it back again, and they still were in the lead with about 11 minutes left in the game. Then, the roof fell in. Northwestern went on a 12-0 run, and that was the game. Michigan got back within 2 points with just over a minute to go, but that was as close as they could get.

It was a very disappointing game, but a fitting way to end a very disappointing season. Northwestern is better than expected this year, but they're still a team that UM should be able to beat easily. Instead, played a sloppy game (19 turnovers), and threw the game away. In all honesty, it didn't matter much if they had won or lost this game, because the next game was against (#1) Illinois, and they would almost certainly have lost that one, if they had gotten past Northwestern. Illinois not only won the Big Ten regular season championship, they also won the Big Ten Tournament, and they're a #1 seed in the NCAA Tournament.

The Big Picture

There is no "big picture", at least not for this season. Michigan won't get a chance to defend their NIT Championship, and they'll end the season with 13 losses in the last 14 games, with only the Penn State win on 02/23/2005 to avoid the longest losing streak in school history.

Of course, there's always next season, and the future looks bright. Michigan only loses 2 players off this year's roster (J.C. Mathis and Dani Wohl), and they get 3 (or perhaps 4) promising new freshmen. If everyone can return healthy (Lester Abram, Chris Hunter, and Brent Petway), and out of legal trouble (Daniel Horton), Michigan will have a very deep and talented lineup next season. More about next season in next week's column, which will also include a season wrapup and final grades.

Game Statistics

Let's look at the shooting statistics from the Northwestern game:

Team	Field goals	3-Pointers	Free throws
Michigan	19-47 (40.4%)	3-16 (18.8%)	15-20 (75.0%)
Northwestern	22-52 (42.3%)	4-19 (21.1%)	10-19 (52.6%)
Advantage	Northwestern	Northwestern	Michigan

The game was close, and so are the shooting stats. In a 2-point game, it doesn't take much of a difference to tip the balance, and the 3 extra baskets by Northwestern (one of them a 3-pointer) more than make up for the 5 extra free throws by Michigan. Where did the 3 extra baskets come from? Check out the non-shooting statistics:

Team	Rebounds	Assists	Turnovers	Blocks	Steals
Michigan	37	11	19	8	7

Northwestern	31	15	12	3	12
Advantage	Mich	NU	NU	Mich	NU

There's where the 3 extra Northwestern baskets came from: Michigan turnovers. Sure, Michigan won the rebounding battle pretty handily, but the 7 extra turnovers more than make up for the 6 extra rebounds. It was a close game, but Northwestern won the battle of the stats, and the game.

Individual Statistics

Coach Amaker started Brent Petway in place Courtney Sims, who has been almost worthless lately, along with Ron Coleman, Graham Brown, Dion Harris, and Dani Wohl. Here's how they did:

Player	Field Goals	3-Pointers	Free Throws	Points
Brent Petway	2-4	0-0	0-0	4
Ron Coleman	0-7	0-5	2-2	2
Graham Brown	0-2	0-0	0-0	0
Dani Wohl	0-1	0-0	0-0	0
Dion Harris	6-17	3-9	4-6	19
Totals	8-31 25.8%	3-14 21.4%	6-8 75.0%	25

These numbers are terrible. It really hurts when 3 of your 5 starters fail to score a field goal, and combine for 2 points. Coleman had a miserable game, and his numbers dragged down the already poor numbers for the rest of the starters. Sure, Harris got his 19 points, but once again, he had to take 17 shots to get them. Michigan does much better in the games where he shoots a better percentage.

Here's how the bench players did in the Northwestern game:

Player	Field Goals	3-Pointers	Free Throws	Points
John Andrews	2-4	0-1	0-1	4
Ashtyn Bell	1-1	0-0	0-0	2
Sherrod Harrell	0-1	0-1	0-0	0
Chris Hunter	0-0	0-0	0-0	0
J.C. Mathis	0-1	0-0	0-0	0
Courtney Sims	8-9	0-0	9-11	25
Totals	11-16 68.8%	0-2 0%	9-12 75.0%	31

Who is this guy? After playing his way to the end of the bench, and looking like he was daydreaming when he was on the court for the last 4-5 games, Courtney Sims suddenly came to life against Northwestern. He was awesome, scoring a career-high 25 points, with fabulous shooting stats from the field and the free-throw line. He played with confidence, power, and passion. If he had played like that during the last few weeks, Michigan probably would have won a couple of those close games that they lost. I don't know what got into him, but I sure hope he can carry it over to next season.

The rest of the bench stats are unimpressive, to say the least. Andrews did his best, and so did Bell, but Harrell, Hunter, and Mathis were invisible out there. At least Hunter got back out on the court, after missing 3 games with a sprained ankle. He only played 2 minutes,

but at least he got back into the game. Now, he'll have the whole off-season to recover from his injury.

The Upcoming Week

There are no more games for Michigan this season. It's over. However, I'll be back next week for one last column for this season, with a season wrapup, final grades, and a look ahead to next season. See you then.

Go Blue!