11/21/2005 – Week #03 – A Fast Start

The Week In Review

It's been a while since Michigan fans have had a football season so disappointing that they're looking forward to basketball season, but that's what we just suffered through. The good news is that the University of Michigan men's basketball team is undefeated! They played their first regular season game on Friday (11/18/2005), and beat Central Michigan University, 87-60. With this victory, Michigan's record is 1-0. They played a good, solid game, and once they took a solid lead, they held it comfortably for the remainder of the game. In the last few years, UM has had trouble with Mid-American Conference teams early in the season, so it was encouraging to see them beat CMU handily. Sure, it's early in the season, but the Wolverines have already looked much better than at any time last season. For example, UM never scored over 80 points in any game last season.

Game Statistics

Let's look at the shooting statistics from the Central Michigan game:

Team	Field goals	3-Pointers	Free throws
Michigan	29-48 (60.4%)	8-18 (44.4%)	21-27 (77.8%)
CMU	24-58 (41.4%)	5-20 (25.0%)	7-11 (63.6%)
Advantage	Michigan	Michigan	Michigan

Right here, you can see why Michigan won this game: they not only shot very well (60.4%), but they held CMU to just over 40% shooting. That was the difference in the game right there. The superior 3-point shooting and free throw shooting helped as well, and so did the fact that UM made almost twice as many free throws (21) as CMU attempted (11).

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

Team	Rebounds	Assists	Turnovers	Blocks	Steals
Michigan	37	21	19	4	7
CMU	21	12	16	0	6
Advantage	Mich	Mich	CMU	Mich	Mich

The game was a blowout, and the proof of it is in these stats. UM won the rebounding battle handily, and they had almost twice as many assists as CMU did. The only negative here is the 19 turnovers.

Individual Statistics

Coach Amaker used his "regular" starting lineup again: Lester Abram, Graham Brown, Dion Harris, Daniel Horton, and Courtney Sims. Here's how they did:

Player	Field Goals	3-Pointers	Free Throws	Points
Lester Abram	7-10	1-2	4-4	19
Graham Brown	2-2	0-0	1-3	5
Dion Harris	4-8	3-6	2-2	13
Daniel Horton	1-4	0-2	1-2	3
Courtney Sims	9-10	0-0	2-2	20
Totals	23-34 67.6%	4-10 40.0%	10-13 76.9%	60

As a group, the starters did fine. They shot well, and they scored as many points as the whole CMU team combined.

Individually, all five starters played well, but Sims, Abram, and Harris all had great games. They all scored in double figures, and they all shot well, especially Sims (9-for-10). Brown only scored 5 points, but he had 11 rebounds, which is great. Horton chipped in 3 points, and 4 assists. Michigan didn't need his scoring in this game.

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

Player	Field Goals	3-Pointers	Free Throws	Points
Amadou Ba	1-1	0-0	0-0	2
Ron Coleman	0-3	0-0	5-6	5
Hayes Grooms	0-0	0-0	0-0	0
Sherrod Harrell	0-0	0-0	0-0	0
Chris Hunter	2-4	1-3	4-4	9
Jevohn Shepherd	1-1	1-1	0-2	3
Jerret Smith	2-5	2-4	2-2	8
Totals	6-14 42.9%	4-8 50.0%	11-14 78.6%	27

Both Hunter and Smith came close to scoring in double figures, and Smith added 9 assists in his first real game as a Wolverine. That's what we're looking for in a point guard: a bunch of assists, and just enough points to keep the opposing defenses honest. Coleman didn't have a very good game offensively, but he played good defense, and got 4 rebounds. Shepherd hit his only shot, a 3-pointer, and hustled, but didn't really contribute much. Harrell and Grooms only played a minute each, and didn't have a chance to do anything. Once again, though, the big story was Amadou ("Do The 'Dou") Ba: he only played the last minute of the game, but he got a very nice layup. He's a crowd favorite, and it was fun to get him in there and see him score.

The Big Picture

After a successful (2-0) exhibition schedule, it was great to see the Wolverines keep the momentum going with a convincing season-opener. CMU isn't a great team, but they were a good early test for this team, and they helped boost the team's confidence. They'll need it, as they're already heading onto the road for their first away game, on Tuesday (11/22/2005) at Boston University. Boston U has upset them the last two years, in Crisler, so Michigan knows not to take them lightly. The Wolverines didn't play well on the road last year (2-11), so this is an important game. They also have a 2nd game this week, at home on Saturday (11/26/2005) against Butler. Butler is a good "mid-major" team, and it will be another good test for Michigan. I expect UM to win both games, but they could be close and exciting.

Here's Michigan's remaining schedule:

Date	Opponent	Site
11/22/2005 (Tue)	Boston University	Boston, MA
11/26/2005 (Sat)	Butler	Ann Arbor
11/29/2005 (Tue)	Miami (FL)	Ann Arbor
12/03/2005 (Sat)	Notre Dame	South Bend, IN
12/07/2005 (Wed)	Delaware State	Ann Arbor
12/10/2005 (Sat)	South Florida	Tampa, FL

12/17/2005 (Sat)	UCLA	Ann Arbor
12/22/2005 (Thu)	Miami (OH)	Ann Arbor
12/28/2005 (Wed)	Coppin State	Ann Arbor
12/31/2005 (Sat)	Chicago State	Ann Arbor
01/03/2006 (Tue)	Indiana	Bloomington, IN
01/07/2006 (Sat)	Purdue	Ann Arbor
01/14/2006 (Sat)	Illinois	Champaign, IL
01/18/2006 (Wed)	Northwestern	Ann Arbor
01/21/2006 (Sat)	Minnesota	Minneapolis, MN
01/25/2006 (Wed)	Michigan State	Ann Arbor
01/28/2006 (Sat)	Wisconsin	Ann Arbor
02/01/2006 (Wed)	Penn State	State College, PA
02/04/2006 (Sat)	Iowa	Iowa City, IA
02/09/2006 (Thu)	Ohio State	Ann Arbor
02/11/2006 (Sat)	Purdue	West Lafayette, IN
02/15/2006 (Wed)	Minnesota	Ann Arbor
02/18/2006 (Sat)	Michigan State	East Lansing, MI
02/21/2006 (Tue)	Illinois	Ann Arbor
02/25/2006 (Sat)	Ohio State	Columbus, OH
03/04/2006 (Sat)	Indiana	Ann Arbor
Big Ten Tournament		
03/09/2006 (Thu)	First Round	Indianapolis, IN
03/10/2006 (Fri)	Quarterfinals	Indianapolis, IN
03/11/2006 (Sat)	Semifinals	Indianapolis, IN
03/12/2006 (Sun)	Finals	Indianapolis, IN

The Upcoming Week

As I mentioned above, Michigan has two games this week. The Tuesday (11/22/2005) game is on the road (at Boston University), but the Saturday (11/26/2005) game is at home against Butler, at 2:00 p.m. I know that it's the Saturday after Thanksgiving, but if you're in town, come on down to Crisler and cheer on the Wolverines.

Go Blue!