11/13/2006 – Week #03 – Long Weekend In The John Thompson Challenge

The Week In Review

The University of Michigan men's basketball team played three games this (long) weekend in the John Thompson Challenge, and they won all three of them. On Friday (11/10/2006), they beat Central Connecticut State (CCSU), 60-40, on Saturday (11/11/2006), they beat Davidson, 78-68, then on Sunday (11/12/2006), they beat Eastern Michigan, 80-51. All three games were in Crisler Arena, and all three games were against Division I teams (even if you've never heard of CCSU before), so the results were pretty encouraging. It's always nice to start the season out with a 3-0 record.

In case you were wondering, CCSU is in the Northeast Conference (NEC), which also contains Fairleigh Dickinson, Quinnipiac, and Robert Morris, among others. CCSU was picked to come in 4th in the NEC this season. The NEC champion gets an automatic berth in the NCAA Tournament, which is why Fairleigh Dickinson and Robert Morris have been in the tournament recently. Davidson played in the Big Dance last year, and Eastern Michigan plays in the Mid-American Conference (MAC), which is a good mid-major conference. I guess what I'm trying to say is that the level of competition wasn't very high, but these weren't total creampuffs either. The creampuffs are coming later in the season.

Michigan never trailed in the games on Friday and Sunday, and they only briefly trailed Davidson (by 6 points) early in the 1st half on Saturday. Once they got a lead in each game, the Wolverines never gave it up. They did let a 15-point lead against Davidson slip down to 5 points in the 2nd half, but they quickly built the lead back up, and protected it nicely the rest of the way. Almost all of the players saw action, and everyone looked pretty good, at times. All in all, the event was a success, even if the attendance numbers were a little low.

Game Statistics

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

Team	Field goals	3-Pointers	Free throws
Michigan	21-44 (47.7%)	8-20 (40.0%)	10-16 (62.5%)
CCSU	13-53 (24.5%)	7-28 (25.0%)	7-14 (50.0%)
Advantage	Michigan	Michigan	Michigan

Michigan didn't shoot particularly well in this game, but CCSU shot terribly, so "not particularly well" was good enough to win.

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

Team	Rebounds	Assists	Turnovers	Blocks	Steals
Michigan	39	16	17	7	7
CCSU	30	8	15	3	7
Advantage	Michigan	Michigan	Michigan	Michigan	Even

The Rebounds and Blocks are the key stats here. Combined with the shooting stats, it's easy to see why Michigan won by 20 points.

Moving on to the Davidson game, let's look at the shooting statistics:

Team	Field goals	3-Pointers	Free throws

Michigan	25-50 (50.0%)	5-15 (33.3%)	23-31 (74.2%)
Davidson	25-62 (40.3%)	7-28 (25.0%)	11-13 (84.6%)
Advantage	Michigan	Michigan	Davidson

This was a pretty close game, and the shooting stats show it. Both teams made 25 field goals, although Davidson had to take 12 more shots to get them. Davidson actually out-scored Michigan from the floor 57-55, but Michigan made up for that, and more, from the free-throw line. That's where the game was won.

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

Team	Rebounds	Assists	Turnovers	Blocks	Steals
Michigan	35	15	15	1	9
Davidson	34	13	16	1	4
Advantage	Michigan	Michigan	Michigan	Even	Michigan

Once again, it was a close game, and these stats are really close. It was free-throw shooting that won the game for Michigan.

Moving on to the Eastern Michigan game, let's look at the shooting statistics:

Team	Field goals	3-Pointers	Free throws
Michigan	32-65 (49.2%)	3-16 (18.8%)	13-19 (68.4%)
Eastern Michigan	16-49 (32.7%)	4-18 (22.2%)	15-17 (88.2%)
Advantage	Michigan	EMU	EMU

Even though EMU shot slightly better at the free-throw line and from 3-point range, it wasn't nearly enough to make up for the 16 extra field goals that Michigan scored. Michigan put the game away in the 1st half, when they shot 64.5% (20-for-31). They just toyed with EMU in the 2nd half.

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

Team	Rebounds	Assists	Turnovers	Blocks	Steals
Michigan	41	19	11	8	14
Michigan Tech	30	9	20	1	5
Advantage	Michigan	Michigan	Michigan	Michigan	Michigan

Here's where the 16 extra field goals for Michigan came from: 11 more rebounds, 9 less turnovers, and 9 more steals. Those are all great numbers for Michigan.

Individual Statistics

Coach Amaker seems to have settled on his starting lineup, and here's how they did this week:

	Field Goals			3-Pointers			Free Throws			Points		
Player	CCSU	DU	EMU	CCSU	DU	EMU	CCSU	DU	EMU	CCSU	DU	EMU
Lester Abram	3-8	2-6	2-4	1-3	1-3	1-2	3-4	2-2	0-0	10	7	5
Ron Coleman	5-8	5-9	3-6	0-2	0-2	1-3	0-0	2-5	1-2	10	12	8
Dion Harris	6-10	5-12	1-6	5-8	2-7	1-4	2-4	11-12	2-2	19	23	5

Brent Petway	0-0	3-8	5-7	0-0	0-0	0-0	1-2	0-1	0-0	1	6	10
Courtney Sims	3-5	7-9	6-9	0-0	0-0	0-0	1-2	7-9	5-6	7	21	17
Totals	17-31 54.8%	22-44 50.0%	17-30 56.7%	6-13 46.2%	3-12 25.0%	3-9 33.3%	7-12 58.3%	22-29 75.9%	8-10 80.0%	47	69	45

As a group, the starters did pretty well. Their percentages are decent, except for 3-point shooting against Davidson and EMU, and they scored a reasonable number of points.

Individually, no one hit double figures in all three games, although Coleman, Harris, and Sims all hit double figures in two of the three games. Petway and Abram played pretty well, and they each had one game in double figures. Besides his 10 points against EMU, Petway also had a career-high 13 rebounds against Davidson.

Since the CCSU and EMU games were blowouts, Amaker got a lot of bench players in, some for extended periods, and others for just a few minutes. Here's how they did:

	Field Goals			3-Pointers			Free Throws			Points		
Player	CCSU	DU	EMU	CCSU	DU	EMU	CCSU	DU	EMU	CCSU	DU	EMU
Reed Baker	0-3	0-0	1-5	0-2	0-0	0-2	0-0	0-0	1-2	0	0	3
Phillip DeVries	DNP	DNP	0-0	DNP	DNP	0-0	DNP	DNP	0-0	DNP	DNP	0
David Merritt	DNP	DNP	0-0	DNP	DNP	0-0	DNP	DNP	0-0	DNP	DNP	0
K'Len Morris	0-0	0-0	2-5	0-0	0-0	0-1	0-0	0-0	1-2	0	0	5
Kendric Price	0-1	DNP	1-1	0-0	DNP	0-0	0-0	DNP	1-2	0	DNP	3
Jevohn Shepherd	2-4	DNP	3-7	1-2	DNP	0-2	0-0	DNP	1-1	5	DNP	7
DeShawn Sims	0-0	DNP	4-6	0-0	DNP	0-1	2-2	DNP	1-2	2	DNP	9
Jerret Smith	2-4	2-4	2-4	1-3	2-3	0-1	1-2	0-0	0-0	6	6	4
Ekpe Udoh	0-1	1-2	2-5	0-0	0-0	0-0	0-0	1-2	0-0	0	3	4
Totals	4-13 30.8%	3-6 50.0%	15-33 45.5%	2-7 28.6%	2-3 66.7%	0-7 0.0%	3-4 75.0%	1-2 50.0%	5-9 55.6%	13	9	35

As a group, the bench players did OK in the three games. Other than 3-point shooting against CCSU and EMU, they shot pretty well, and they chipped in a nice portion of Michigan's points, especially in the EMU game.

Individually, a couple of the bench players had good games. Morris, Price, Shepherd, and Sims all played well against EMU, and Smith and Udoh played well in all three games. Baker was OK in the EMU game, but he didn't look as good in the other two games. DeVries and Merritt only got garbage time.

The only player who didn't get into any of the games was Anthony Wright. He also only played sparingly in the two exhibition games. I haven't heard anything about an injury, so I'm going to speculate that he's going to be red-shirted this season. I haven't heard anything official, but I keep an eye on this. It would be silly for him to waste a year of his eligibility if he's not going to get much playing time.

The Big Picture

Michigan looked pretty good in their first three games. They handled CCSU and EMU easily, and they worked through a little adversity against Davidson. They were good games for getting some things worked out. They were games that Michigan was expected to win, and they did.

Here's the 2006-2007 schedule/results:

Date	Opponent	Site	Result	Score	Record
11/02/2006 (Thu)	Wayne State (exh)	Ann Arbor	W	85-51	0-0
11/05/2006 (Sun)	Michigan Tech (exh)	Ann Arbor	W	85-50	0-0
John Thompson Challenge					
11/10/2006 (Fri)	Central Connecticut State	Ann Arbor	W	60-40	1-0
11/11/2006 (Sat)	Davidson	Ann Arbor	W	78-68	2-0
11/12/2006 (Sun)	Eastern Michigan	Ann Arbor	W	80-51	3-0
11/15/2006 (Wed)	Wisconsin-Milwaukee	Ann Arbor			
11/17/2006 (Fri)	Harvard	Ann Arbor			
11/22/2006 (Wed)	Youngstown State	Ann Arbor			
11/25/2006 (Sat)	Maryland-Baltimore County	Ann Arbor			
ACC/Big Ten Challenge					
11/27/2006 (Mon)	North Carolina State	Raleigh, NC			
12/02/2006 (Sat)	Wofford	Ann Arbor			
12/07/2006 (Thu)	Miami (OH)	Oxford, OH			
12/09/2006 (Sat)	Delaware State	Ann Arbor			
12/16/2006 (Sat)	Northern Illinois	Ann Arbor			
12/23/2006 (Sat)	UCLA	Los Angeles, CA			
12/28/2006 (Thu)	Army	Ann Arbor			
12/30/2006 (Sat)	Georgetown	Ann Arbor			
01/03/2007 (Wed)	Illinois	Ann Arbor			
01/06/2007 (Sat)	Northwestern	Evanston, IL			
01/13/2007 (Sat)	Purdue	West Lafayette, IN			
01/17/2007 (Wed)	Penn State	Ann Arbor			
01/20/2007 (Sat)	Purdue	Ann Arbor			
01/24/2007 (Wed)	Wisconsin	Madison, WI			
01/27/2007 (Sat)	Indiana	Bloomington, IN			
01/31/2007 (Wed)	Iowa	Ann Arbor			
02/06/2007 (Tue)	Ohio State	Columbus, OH			
02/10/2007 (Sat)	Minnesota	Ann Arbor			
02/13/2007 (Tue)	Michigan State	East Lansing, MI			
02/17/2007 (Sat)	Indiana	Ann Arbor			
02/21/2007 (Wed)	Illinois	Champaign, IL			
02/24/2007 (Sat)	Minnesota	Minneapolis, MN			
02/27/2007 (Tue) or 02/28/2007 (Wed)	Michigan State	Ann Arbor			
03/03/2007 (Sat)	Ohio State	Ann Arbor			
Big Ten Tournament					
03/08/2007 (Thu)	First Round	Chicago, IL			
03/09/2007 (Fri)	Quarterfinals	Chicago, IL			
03/10/2007 (Sat)	Semifinals	Chicago, IL			
03/11/2007 (Sun)	Finals	Chicago, IL			

The Upcoming Week

As you can see in the schedule above, Michigan has two games this week, including the "host team matchup" of the John Thompson Challenge. On Wednesday (11/15/2006), they play Wisconsin-Milwaukee, then on Friday (11/10/2006), they play Harvard. Both games

are in Crisler Arena, and both games start at 7:00 p.m. These are two more games that Michigan is expected to win, but only if they play well. These are not creampuffs. They're still coming (Youngstown State, Maryland-Baltimore County, Wofford, and Delaware State).

Come on out and cheer on the Wolverines.

Go Blue!