12/04/2006 – Week #06 – Learning A Lesson

The Week In Review

The University of Michigan men's basketball team played two games this week, and they won one and lost one. On Monday (11/27/2006), they lost at North Carolina State (NCSU), 74-67, then on Saturday (12/02/2006), they beat Wofford in Crisler Arena, 83-49. After the loss to NCSU, the Michigan players all talked about the game being a lesson. They appeared to have learned the lesson well, because they played their best game of the season against Wofford. The win and loss leave UM with an overall record of 8-1.

The NCSU game was a mess. Sure, it was Michigan's first road game, but it was also their first real test, and they flunked it. Michigan took an early 16-4 lead, then they let NCSU go on a 51-18 run. That turned a nice 12-point lead into a 21-point deficit, 55-34. They mounted a very nice comeback, and they got within 7 points, but that was as close as they could get. It was very disheartening during that 51-18 run, because Michigan seemed powerless to stop NC State. For most of this season they have played good defense, even if their offense has been spotty, but not during the middle part of the NCSU game. They finally got their act together, but it was too late.

By contrast, the Wofford game was nice and crisp. Michigan played stifling defense, and they shot much better than they did against NCSU. Certainly, NCSU is a better team than Wofford, but the big difference was in Michigan's focus and execution, not in the quality of the opponent.

Game Statistics

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

Team	Field goals	3-Pointers	Free throws
Michigan	27-71 (38.0%)	8-27 (29.6%)	5-5 (100.0%)
NC State	26-61 (42.6%)	7-18 (38.9%)	15-23 (65.2%)
Advantage	NC State	NC State	Michigan

In this case, the percentages don't tell the story, the number of "makes" tells the story. Michigan made more baskets (by 1) and more 3-pointers (by 1) than NC State, but NC State more than made that up by making 10 more free throws. There's the difference in the game right there.

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

Team	Rebounds	Assists	Turnovers	Blocks	Steals
Michigan	43	14	13	10	6
NC State	42	12	13	4	6
Advantage	Michigan	Michigan	Even	Michigan	Even

These stats are all pretty close, but they didn't make the difference in the game. It was free throws that won the game for NC State.

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

Team	Field goals	3-Pointers	Free throws
Michigan	34-55 (61.8%)	9-14 (64.3%)	6-8 (75.0%)

Wofford	17-57 (29.8%)	11-31 (35.5%)	4-6 (66.7%)
Advantage	Michigan	Michigan	Michigan

This will probably be the largest difference between shooting percentages this season. Michigan hit exactly twice as many baskets, on 2 less shots. That's how you win a game by 34 points. Note how many 3-pointers Wofford attempted. That may also be the season high for a Michigan opponent. Fortunately, the Michigan defense contested almost all of those 3-pointers, so only 11 of them went in.

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

Team	Rebounds	Assists	Turnovers	Blocks	Steals
Michigan	38	24	14	6	5
Wofford	24	15	13	0	5
Advantage	Michigan	Michigan	Wofford	Michigan	Even

Those 14 extra rebounds sure helped, and so did the extra 6 blocks, but the main stat was shooting percentage.

Individual Statistics

Coach Amaker went with his regular starting lineup in both games, and here's how they did:

	Field Goals		3-Pointers		Free Throws		Points	
Player	NCSU	Woff	NCSU	Woff	NCSU	Woff	NCSU	Woff
Lester Abram	2-8	3-5	0-2	1-1	0-0	0-0	4	7
Ron Coleman	4-11	3-7	3-5	2-4	0-0	0-0	11	8
Dion Harris	8-20	5-9	4-14	2-4	4-4	2-3	24	14
Brent Petway	3-8	4-4	0-0	0-0	0-0	0-0	6	8
Courtney Sims	3-7	9-12	0-0	0-0	1-1	1-1	7	19
Totals	20-54 37.0%	24-37 64.9%	7-21 33.3%	5-9 55.6%	5-5 100.0%	3-4 75.0%	52	56

As a group, the starters did OK. Their percentages are decent, except for shooting against NCSU, and they scored most of the points.

Individually, only Harris hit double figures in both games, and Coleman came close. Sims had one good game and one lousy game, and Abram had 2 mediocre games. Petway did everything that was asked of him in both games.

Coach Amaker only played 5 bench players at NC State, but he got 7 bench players into the Wofford game. Jerret Smith suffered a mild injury in the NC State game, and K'Len Morris came in for him. Smith was healthy for the Wofford game, but Morris missed the game with a dislocated shoulder injury, suffered in practice. This is an old injury for Morris, and it could keep him out for the rest of the non-conference schedule. Also, Ekpe Udoh left the Wofford game with a mild knee injury (he banged his knee into the knee of a Wofford player), but it appears that he's fine.

Here's how the bench players did this week:

	Field Goals		3-Pointers		Free Throws		Points	
Player	NCSU	Woff	NCSU	Woff	NCSU	Woff	NCSU	Woff
Reed Baker	DNP	1-1	DNP	1-1	DNP	0-0	DNP	3

David Merritt	DNP	0-0	DNP	0-0	DNP	0-0	DNP	0
K'Len Morris	0-2	DNP	0-1	DNP	0-0	DNP	0	DNP
Kendric Price	DNP	0-0	DNP	0-0	DNP	0-0	DNP	0
Jevohn Shepherd	0-0	1-3	0-0	1-1	0-0	0-0	0	3
DeShawn Sims	0-2	4-5	0-0	0-1	0-0	1-2	0	9
Jerret Smith	2-6	2-3	1-4	2-2	0-0	2-2	5	8
Ekpe Udoh	5-7	2-6	0-1	0-0	0-0	0-0	10	4
Totals	7-17 41.2%	10-18 55.6%	1-6 16.7%	4-4 100.0%	0-0 0.0%	3-4 75.0%	15	27

As a group, the bench players did OK. Their shooting percentages are decent, except for 3-point shooting against NCSU, and they did chip in a few points.

Udoh is emerging as a very good 6th man, and Smith looked good out there in both games. DeShawn Sims didn't do much against NCSU, but he played great in the Wofford game, especially in the 2nd half. Baker and Shepherd did OK out there, but nothing special.

The Big Picture

Michigan looked bad for most of the game against NCSU, but they looked a lot better against Wofford. If they continue to play like they did against Wofford, they should easily win the rest of their "creampuff" games: Miami (OH), Delaware State, Northern Illinois, and Army, and they'll stand a good chance against Georgetown in Crisler. Forget about winning at UCLA.

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	W	66-59	4-0
11/17/2006 (Fri)	Harvard	Ann Arbor	W	82-50	5-0
11/22/2006 (Wed)	Youngstown State	Ann Arbor	W	65-56	6-0
11/25/2006 (Sat)	Maryland-Baltimore County	Ann Arbor	W	66-54	7-0
ACC/Big Ten Challenge					
11/27/2006 (Mon)	North Carolina State	Raleigh, NC	L	67-74	7-1
12/02/2006 (Sat)	Wofford	Ann Arbor	W	83-49	8-1
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			

Date	Opponent	Site	Result	Score	Record
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 more games this week. On Thursday (12/07/2006, 8:00 p.m.), they play at Miami (OH), then on Saturday (12/09/2006, 2:00 p.m.), they play Delaware State in Crisler Arena. The Wolverines should win both of these games, even though the Miami (OH) game is on the road. Incidentally, the Miami (OH) game is on ESPNU, made famous by the UM vs. Indiana football game. Also, note that some schedules might show that the Miami (OH) game starts at 9:00 p.m. That was the original starting time, but they recently moved it to 8:00 p.m.

Come on out and cheer on the Wolverines on Saturday.

Go Blue!