01/08/2007 – Week #11 – A Flying Start To The Big Ten Season

The Week In Review

The University of Michigan men's basketball team played two games this week, and they won them both. On Wednesday (01/03/2007), they beat Illinois (71-61) in Crisler Arena, then on Saturday (01/06/2007), they beat Northwestern (58-46) on the road. The two wins raise Michigan's record to 14-3 (2-0). They are currently tied for 1st place in the Big Ten.

While the win at Northwestern was expected, the Illinois game was much more of a "toss up" game. After underachieving in all 3 "non-creampuff" games in the non-conference season (NC State, UCLA, and Georgetown), it was great to see Michigan play well against a quality opponent in the Illinois game. The game went back and forth for most of the 1st half and the early part of the 2nd half, before Michigan went up for good with 16:38 left in the game. It was very encouraging to see the Wolverines get and hold a lead against a good team. They played tough down the stretch, and earned the win.

The win at Northwestern was a little more predictable, but a win on the road in the Big Ten is nothing to sneeze at. In the first week of league play there were 11 Big Ten games, and the home team won 9 of them. Only Ohio State and Michigan won on the road in the first week. It was great to see Michigan go into a hostile arena and play with poise and focus against a team that can drive you crazy with their slow, deliberate play. Once again, the game went back and forth for the whole 1st half and the start of the 2nd half, but once Michigan got a lead in the 2nd half, they held it the rest of the way.

Game Statistics

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

Team	Field goals	3-Pointers	Free throws
Michigan	26-52 (50.0%)	5-11 (45.5%)	14-15 (93.3%)
Illinois	20-53 (37.7%)	7-21 (33.3%)	14-21 (66.7%)
Advantage	Michigan	Michigan	Michigan

Here's where the game was won: overall shooting percentage. Those 6 extra baskets made all the difference. All the percentages are great, especially the free throw percentage.

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

Team	Rebounds	Assists	Turnovers	Blocks	Steals
Michigan	37	14	16	6	4
Illinois	26	13	12	1	7
Advantage	Michigan	Michigan	Illinois	Michigan	Illinois

Michigan has done very well rebounding all season, and this is yet another example. The rest of these stats aren't that important, except maybe Blocks.

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

Team	Field goals	3-Pointers	Free throws
Michigan	22-47 (46.8%)	4-19 (21.1%)	10-17 (58.8%)
Northwestern	16-50 (32.0%)	5-24 (20.8%)	9-12 (75.0%)
Advantage	Michigan	Michigan	Northwestern

Once again, it was overall shooting percentage that won the game. The 3-point and free-throw shooting were both very close, but the overall shooting won the game for Michigan.

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

Team	Rebounds	Assists	Turnovers	Blocks	Steals
Michigan	38	13	11	6	2
Northwestern	28	13	10	1	8
Advantage	Michigan	Even	NU	Michigan	NU

Ten extra rebounds equals ten extra possessions. The rest of these stats all balance out.

Individual Statistics

Coach Amaker went back to his regular starters: Lester Abram, Ron Coleman, Dion Harris, Brent Petway, and Courtney Sims, and they responded. Here's how they did:

	Field Goals		3-Pointers		Free Throws		Points	
Player	Illinois	NU	Illinois	NU	Illinois	NU	Illinois	NU
Lester Abram	9-13	4-8	1-2	1-4	6-6	0-0	25	9
Ron Coleman	1-5	3-7	0-4	0-2	0-0	0-0	2	6
Dion Harris	8-16	2-10	3-4	0-5	3-3	2-3	22	6
Brent Petway	1-2	2-3	0-0	0-0	0-0	3-4	2	7
Courtney Sims	3-4	3-3	0-0	0-0	2-2	3-4	8	9
Totals	22-40 55.0%	10-24 41.7%	4-10 40.0%	1-7 14.3%	11-11 100.0%	6-8 75.0%	59	37

As a group, the starters did pretty well. Their percentages are good, except for 3-point shooting against Northwestern, and they scored a lot of points against Illinois, but not against Northwestern.

Individually, no one hit double figures in both games, although Abram and Sims came close. Abram had a great game against Illinois, and he played pretty well at Northwestern, even though he didn't score many points. Likewise, Harris had a very good game against Illinois, but he was off in the Northwestern game. The other starters didn't contribute much, although Sims did have 10 rebounds against Illinois, and Petway had 8 against Northwestern.

It was good to see the upperclass group play better together this week, after struggling in the last 3 non-conference games. This team will go as far as the upperclassmen can take them.

Coach Amaker went back to his "young 5" on the bench, and they played pretty well:

	Field Goals		3-Pointers		Free Throws		Points	
Player	Illinois	NU	Illinois	NU	Illinois	NU	Illinois	NU
Reed Baker	1-1	3-8	1-1	3-7	0-0	2-2	3	11
Jevohn Shepherd	0-0	DNP	0-0	DNP	0-0	DNP	0	DNP
DeShawn Sims	0-4	1-2	0-0	0-0	0-0	0-1	0	2
Jerret Smith	1-3	0-1	0-0	0-1	3-4	0-0	5	0
Ekpe Udoh	2-4	4-5	0-0	0-0	0-0	0-3	4	8

Totals	4-12 33.3%	8-16 50.0%	1-1 100.0%	3-8 37.5%	3-4 75.0%	2-6 33.3%	12	21

As a group, the bench players did OK. Their shooting percentages are pretty good, and they did chip in a few points.

Individually, Baker and Udoh both had good games, against Northwestern. Baker didn't do much against Illinois, but he was the team's leading scorer at Northwestern. Udoh had a decent game against Illinois, and an even better one at Northwestern. Sims and Smith did OK, but not great. Then there's Shepherd. I don't know what's up with him. He didn't play at all in the Georgetown game, he only played 2 minutes against Illinois, and he didn't play at all in the Northwestern game. He doesn't appear to be sick or injured, so it might be a disciplinary action.

The Big Picture

Michigan had a great first week in the Big Ten, but there's still a long way to go. Their next 3 games are all winnable, so they could conceivably be 5-0 in the Big Ten when they head to a near-certain loss at Wisconsin on 01/24/2007.

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	W	62-56	9-1
12/09/2006 (Sat)	Delaware State	Ann Arbor	W	70-43	10-1
12/16/2006 (Sat)	Northern Illinois	Ann Arbor	W	67-52	11-1
12/23/2006 (Sat)	UCLA	Los Angeles, CA	L	92-55	11-2
12/28/2006 (Thu)	Army	Ann Arbor	W	62-50	12-2
12/30/2006 (Sat)	Georgetown	Ann Arbor	L	51-67	12-3
01/03/2007 (Wed)	Illinois	Ann Arbor	W	71-61	13-3
01/06/2007 (Sat)	Northwestern	Evanston, IL	W	58-46	14-3
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			

Date	Opponent	Site	Result	Score	Record
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			

Big Ten Results

Here are the current Big Ten standings, after Week #1 of league play:

Team	Big Ten			Overall		
	Wins	Losses	Percent	Wins	Losses	Percent
Ohio State	2	0	1.000	13	2	0.867
Michigan	2	0	1.000	14	3	0.824
Wisconsin	1	0	1.000	15	1	0.938
Iowa	1	0	1.000	9	6	0.600
Purdue	1	1	0.500	12	4	0.750
Indiana	1	1	0.500	10	4	0.714
Penn State	1	1	0.500	10	5	0.667
Minnesota	1	1	0.500	7	9	0.438
Michigan State	0	2	0.000	13	4	0.765
Illinois	0	2	0.000	12	5	0.706
Northwestern	0	2	0.000	10	5	0.667

Here are the results from last week's games:

Tuesday (01/02/2007)
Indiana lost at Ohio State, 74-67

Wednesday (01/03/2007)
Illinois lost at Michigan, 71-61
Northwestern lost at Penn State, 85-57
Purdue lost at Minnesota, 65-59

Thursday (01/04/2007)
Michigan State lost at Iowa, 62-60

Saturday (01/06/2007)
Michigan won at Northwestern, 58-46
Penn State lost at Purdue, 64-60
Ohio State won at Illinois, 62-44
Minnesota lost at Wisconsin, 68-45

Sunday (01/07/2007)
Michigan State lost at Indiana, 73-51

The only real surprises this week were that Michigan State lost both of their games, including getting blown out at Indiana. They were ranked, but that should change this week.

Here are the games scheduled for the upcoming week:

Tuesday (01/09/2007)
Ohio State at Wisconsin

Wednesday (01/10/2007)
Purdue at Indiana
Iowa at Illinois
Northwestern at Michigan State

Saturday (01/13/2007)
Michigan at Purdue
Indiana at Penn State
Tennessee at Ohio State (non conference)
Wisconsin at Northwestern
Minnesota at Iowa

Sunday (01/14/2007)
Illinois at Michigan State

There are a couple of big games this week:

- Ohio State at Wisconsin on Tuesday. This is the biggest matchup of the season, since these are the teams that will probably finish #1 and #2 in the league.
- Iowa at Illinois on Wednesday. Illinois is already 0-2 in the league, and can't afford another loss so early in the season.
- Illinois at Michigan State on Sunday. See above. Illinois needs to win this one to stay in the Big Ten race.

Here are all the Big Ten results for the whole season, with the teams in alphabetical order, and the wins, losses, and remaining games in scheduled order:

Team	Record	Wins	Losses	Remaining Games
Illinois	0-2		Michigan (A) Ohio State (H)	Iowa (H) Michigan State (A) Minnesota (A) Wisconsin (H) Indiana (H) Purdue (A) Michigan State (H) Minnesota (H) Northwestern (A) Indiana (A) Northwestern (H) Michigan (H) Penn State (A) Iowa (A)
Indiana	1-1	Michigan State (H)	Ohio State (A)	Purdue (H) Penn State (A) Iowa (H)

				Illinois (A) Michigan (H) Wisconsin (H) Iowa (A) Illinois (H) Purdue (A) Michigan (A) Minnesota (H) Michigan State (A) Northwestern (A) Penn State (H)
Iowa	1-0	Michigan State (H)		Illinois (A) Minnesota (H) Indiana (A) Ohio State (A) Penn State (H) Wisconsin (H) Michigan (A) Indiana (H) Minnesota (A) Wisconsin (A) Northwestern (H) Michigan State (A) Purdue (H) Penn State (A) Illinois (H)
Michigan	2-0	Illinois (H) Northwestern (A)		Purdue (A) Penn State (H) Purdue (H) Wisconsin (A) Indiana (A) Iowa (H) Ohio State (A) Minnesota (H) Michigan State (A) Indiana (H) Illinois (A) Minnesota (A) Michigan State (H) Ohio State (H)
Michigan State	0-2		Iowa (A) Indiana (A)	Northwestern (H) Illinois (H) Penn State (A) Minnesota (H) Ohio State (A) Illinois (A) Ohio State (H) Purdue (A) Michigan (H) Iowa (H) Wisconsin (H) Indiana (H) Michigan (A)

				Wisconsin (A)
Minnesota	1-1	Purdue (H)	Wisconsin (A)	Iowa (A) Illinois (H) Northwestern (H) Michigan State (A) Penn State (H) Northwestern (A) Illinois (A) Iowa (H) Michigan (A) Wisconsin (H) Ohio State (H) Indiana (A) Michigan (H) Purdue (A)
Northwestern	0-2		Penn State (A) Michigan (H)	Michigan State (A) Wisconsin (H) Ohio State (A) Minnesota (A) Ohio State (H) Minnesota (H) Wisconsin (A) Illinois (H) Penn State (H) Iowa (A) Illinois (A) Purdue (H) Indiana (H) Purdue (A)
Ohio State	2-0	Indiana (H) Illinois (A)		Wisconsin (A) Northwestern (H) Iowa (H) Northwestern (A) Michigan State (H) Purdue (A) Michigan State (A) Michigan (H) Purdue (H) Penn State (A) Minnesota (A) Penn State (H) Wisconsin (H) Michigan (A)
Penn State	1-1	Northwestern (H)	Purdue (A)	Indiana (H) Michigan (A) Michigan State (H) Iowa (A) Minnesota (A) Purdue (H) Wisconsin (H) Northwestern (A) Ohio State (H) Wisconsin (A)

				Ohio State (A) Illinois (H) Iowa (H) Indiana (A)
Purdue	1-1	Penn State (H)	Minnesota (A)	Indiana (A) Michigan (H) Wisconsin (A) Michigan (A) Illinois (H) Ohio State (H) Penn State (A) Michigan State (H) Ohio State (A) Indiana (H) Iowa (A) Northwestern (A) Minnesota (H) Northwestern (H)
Wisconsin	1-0	Minnesota (H)		Ohio State (H) Northwestern (A) Purdue (H) Illinois (A) Michigan (H) Iowa (A) Indiana (A) Northwestern (H) Penn State (A) Iowa (H) Minnesota (A) Penn State (H) Michigan State (A) Ohio State (A) Michigan State (H)

Looking at all the schedules:

- Only one team starts with 2 home games: Wisconsin.
- Only one team starts with 2 away games: Michigan State.
- Only one team has more than 2 home games in a row: Michigan State. In fact, they have 4 home games in a row, which is a huge advantage. This is quite unfair.
- No teams have more than 2 away games in a row. This is a big improvement over a few years ago, when the Big Ten schedules 3-game road trips.
- Only two teams end with 2 home games: Michigan and Purdue.
- Only two teams end with 2 away games: Illinois and Michigan State.

The Upcoming Week

As you can see in the schedule above, Michigan only has one game this week. On Saturday (01/13/2007, 9:00 p.m. EST) they play at Purdue. The game will be televised locally, so tune by to see how Michigan does.

Go Blue!