01/29/2007 – Week #14 – Two More Predictable Losses

The Week In Review

The University of Michigan men's basketball team played two games this week, and they lost both of them. On Wednesday (01/24/2007), they lost at (#2) Wisconsin (71-58), then on Saturday (01/27/2007), they lost at (#23) Indiana (76-61). Both games were on the road. The losses drop Michigan's record to 16-6 (4-3). They are currently tied for 4th place in the Big Ten.

Both of these losses were very predictable. Wisconsin is a very good team, and they're practically unbeatable at home. Indiana isn't quite as good as Wisconsin, but they're also practically unbeatable at home. After the most recent loss, IU has now beaten Michigan 11 times in a row in Bloomington. Michigan might be able to spring an upset or two still this season, but these were two very unlikely setting for such an upset.

In the Wisconsin game, the Wolverines started fast, opening a nice 9-0 lead, then things started going the other way. Wisconsin went ahead, then Michigan managed to tie the game up at 19-19, but that was the end of the fun. Wisconsin went ahead again, and once they got ahead, they never looked back. Michigan was always way behind, and never really stood a chance.

The Indiana game was even worse. IU started off with an 11-0 run, and Michigan never got any closer than 6 points the rest of the way. They did get within 9 with about 5 minutes left, but that didn't even last long.

Game Statistics

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

Team	Field goals	3-Pointers	Free throws
Michigan	22-49 (44.9%)	2-9 (22.2%)	12-19 (63.2%)
Wisconsin	26-48 (54.2%)	3-6 (50.0%)	16-26 (61.5%)
Advantage	Wisconsin	Wisconsin	Michigan

These stats are deceptively close. Actually, the score was deceptively close. Wisconsin should have won the game by at least 20 points.

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

Team	Rebounds	Assists	Turnovers	Blocks	Steals
Michigan	30	11	19	8	8
Wisconsin	30	14	13	4	6
Advantage	Even	Wisconsin	Wisconsin	Michigan	Michigan

These stats are also deceptively close. The key stat, probably for the whole game, is turnovers.

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

Team	Field goals	3-Pointers	Free throws
Michigan	15-43 (34.9%)	2-9 (22.2%)	29-35 (82.9%)
Indiana	28-55 (50.9%)	10-20 (50.0%)	10-18 (55.6%)

Advantage	Indiana	Indiana	Michigan

Here's where Michigan lost the game: shooting percentage, both overall and 3-point shooting. Michigan almost kept up with some great free-throw shooting, it's hard to match 3-pointers with free throws.

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

Team	Rebounds	Assists	Turnovers	Blocks	Steals
Michigan	28	8	10	3	4
Indiana	35	15	9	5	5
Advantage	Indiana	Indiana	Indiana	Indiana	Indiana

It isn't often that Michigan gets out-rebounded by 7 boards. That sure helped IU beat UM. The rest of these stats aren't significant.

Individual Statistics

Coach Amaker went with his main starting lineup again. Here's how they did:

	Field Goals		3-Pointers		Free Throws		Points	
Player	Wisc	Indiana	Wisc	Indiana	Wisc	Indiana	Wisc	Indiana
Lester Abram	4-6	4-8	1-2	0-1	1-3	4-5	10	12
Ron Coleman	4-7	1-4	0-2	1-3	0-0	9-9	8	12
Dion Harris	4-9	3-9	1-4	1-2	0-0	5-5	9	12
Brent Petway	1-3	1-3	0-0	0-0	0-1	1-2	2	3
Courtney Sims	5-8	2-6	0-0	0-0	6-7	7-8	16	11
Totals	18-33 54.5%	11-30 36.7%	2-8 25.0%	2-6 33.3%	7-11 63.6%	26-29 89.7%	45	50

As a group, the starters did pretty well. Their percentages are good, except for 3-point shooting. They just didn't score enough points.

Individually, only both Abram and Sims hit double figures in both games, although Coleman and Harris both came close. Petway didn't contribute much. Actually, none of the starters had a really good game this week.

Here's how the bench players did this week:

	Field Goals		3-Pointers		Free Throws		Points	
Player	Wisc	Indiana	Wisc	Indiana	Wisc	Indiana	Wisc	Indiana
Reed Baker	0-0	2-6	0-0	0-3	0-0	0-0	0	4
Kendric Price	0-0	DNP	0-0	DNP	0-0	DNP	0	DNP
Jevohn Shepherd	1-3	0-1	0-0	0-0	1-4	0-0	3	0
DeShawn Sims	2-8	0-2	0-1	0-0	0-0	0-0	4	0
Jerret Smith	0-2	DNP	0-0	DNP	0-0	DNP	0	DNP
Ekpe Udoh	1-3	2-4	0-0	0-0	4-4	3-6	6	7
Totals	4-16 25.0%	4-13 30.8%	0-1 0.0%	0-3 0.0%	5-8 62.5%	3-6 50.0%	13	11

As a group, the bench players had a pretty bad week. Their shooting percentages are poor, and they didn't contribute many points.

Individually, only Udoh had 2 decent games.

The Big Picture

As expected, Michigan lost both games this week, in two of the toughest places to play in the Big Ten. If they had managed to win either of the games, it would have been a huge upset.

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 (1-0)
01/06/2007 (Sat)	Northwestern	Evanston, IL	W	58-46	14-3 (2-0)
01/13/2007 (Sat)	Purdue	West Lafayette, IN	L	53-67	14-4 (2-1)
01/17/2007 (Wed)	Penn State	Ann Arbor	W	77-57	15-4 (3-1)
01/20/2007 (Sat)	Purdue	Ann Arbor	W	71-55	16-4 (4-1)
01/24/2007 (Wed)	Wisconsin	Madison, WI	L	58-71	16-5 (4-2)
01/27/2007 (Sat)	Indiana	Bloomington, IN	L	61-76	16-6 (4-3)
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			

Things don't get a lot easier for Michigan. They get a relatively easy "toss up" game against Iowa, then they go play at Ohio State. They definitely need to beat Iowa in Ann Arbor, but

they stand little chance against Ohio State in Columbus. They have a relatively easy game against Minnesota, in Ann Arbor, then they play the Feisty Farmers in East Lansing, Indiana at home, and Illinois on the road.

Assuming the games work out as expected (UM beating only Iowa and Minnesota), Michigan's record will have fallen to 18-10 (6-7). That would mean that they'll have to win at Minnesota (not always an easy task) and at home vs. Michigan State in order to get up to 20 wins. I'm writing off the home finale against Ohio State as a lost cause.

Big Ten Results

Here are the current Big Ten standings, after Week #4 of league play:

Team	Big Ten			Overall		
	Wins	Losses	Percent	Wins	Losses	Percent
Wisconsin	7	0	1.000	21	1	0.955
Ohio State	6	1	0.857	18	3	0.857
Indiana	5	2	0.714	15	5	0.750
Michigan State	4	3	0.571	17	5	0.773
Michigan	4	3	0.571	16	6	0.727
Purdue	3	4	0.429	14	7	0.667
Iowa	3	4	0.429	11	10	0.524
Illinois	3	5	0.375	15	8	0.652
Minnesota	2	5	0.286	8	13	0.381
Northwestern	1	6	0.143	11	9	0.550
Penn State	1	6	0.143	10	10	0.500

Here are the results from last week's games:

Tuesday (01/23/2007)
Indiana lost at Illinois, 51-43

Wednesday (01/24/2007)
Michigan lost at Wisconsin, 71-58
Minnesota lost at Michigan State, 70-46
Ohio State won at Northwestern, 59-50
Penn State lost at Iowa, 79-63

Saturday (01/27/2007)
Michigan lost at Indiana, 76-61
Penn State lost at Minnesota, 65-60
Illinois lost at Purdue, 64-47
Michigan State lost at Ohio State, 66-64

Sunday (01/28/2007)
Wisconsin won at Iowa, 57-46

The home teams did very well this week, going 8-2. The 2 road wins were predictable. The only surprise this week was Illinois losing at Purdue on Saturday, especially after how well they played at home against Indiana on Tuesday. It just goes to show how tough it is to win on the road in the Big Ten.

Here are the games scheduled for the upcoming week:

Tuesday (01/30/2007)
Michigan State at Illinois

Wednesday (01/31/2007)
Iowa at Michigan
Ohio State at Purdue
Wisconsin at Indiana
Minnesota at Northwestern

Saturday (02/03/2007)
Purdue at Penn State
Indiana at Iowa
Northwestern at Wisconsin
Ohio State at Michigan State
Minnesota at Illinois

There are a few big games this week:

- Michigan State at Illinois on Tuesday. Both teams are trying to stay in the Big Ten race, but Illinois can't afford to lose another game.
- Iowa at Michigan on Wednesday. These are two more teams trying to stay in the race, and Iowa can't afford to lose another game.
- Wisconsin at Indiana on Wednesday. Here's yet another team trying to keep pace with Wisconsin. They actually might be able to beat Wisconsin at home.
- Indiana at Iowa on Saturday. We're starting to look at "elimination games" for the Big Ten race. The loser of this one is probably out of the race.
- Ohio State at Michigan State on Saturday. Ohio State barely hung on to beat Michigan State in Columbus. Michigan State should return the favor in East Lansing.

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	3-5	Iowa (H) Minnesota (A) Indiana (H)	Michigan (A) Ohio State (H) Michigan State (A) Wisconsin (H) Purdue (A)	Michigan State (H) Minnesota (H) Northwestern (A) Indiana (A) Northwestern (H) Michigan (H) Penn State (A) Iowa (A)
Indiana	5-2	Michigan State (H) Purdue (H) Penn State (A) Iowa (H) Michigan (H)	Ohio State (A) Illinois (A)	Wisconsin (H) Iowa (A) Illinois (H) Purdue (A) Michigan (A) Minnesota (H) Michigan State (A) Northwestern (A) Penn State (H)
Iowa	3-4	Michigan State (H) Minnesota (H) Penn State (H)	Illinois (A) Indiana (A) Ohio State (A)	Michigan (A) Indiana (H) Minnesota (A)

			Wisconsin (H)	Wisconsin (A) Northwestern (H) Michigan State (A) Purdue (H) Penn State (A) Illinois (H)
Michigan	4-3	Illinois (H) Northwestern (A) Penn State (H) Purdue (H)	Purdue (A) 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	4-3	Northwestern (H) Illinois (H) Penn State (A) Minnesota (H)	Iowa (A) Indiana (A) Ohio State (A)	Illinois (A) Ohio State (H) Purdue (A) Michigan (H) Iowa (H) Wisconsin (H) Indiana (H) Michigan (A) Wisconsin (A)
Minnesota	2-5	Purdue (H) Penn State (H)	Wisconsin (A) Iowa (A) Illinois (H) Northwestern (H) Michigan State (A)	Northwestern (A) Illinois (A) Iowa (H) Michigan (A) Wisconsin (H) Ohio State (H) Indiana (A) Michigan (H) Purdue (A)
Northwestern	1-6	Minnesota (A)	Penn State (A) Michigan (H) Michigan State (A) Wisconsin (H) Ohio State (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	6-1	Indiana (H) Illinois (A) Northwestern (H) Iowa (H) Northwestern (A) Michigan State (H)	Wisconsin (A)	Purdue (A) Michigan State (A) Michigan (H) Purdue (H) Penn State (A) Minnesota (A) Penn State (H) Wisconsin (H) Michigan (A)
Penn State	1-6	Northwestern (H)	Purdue (A)	Purdue (H)

			Indiana (H) Michigan (A) Michigan State (H) Iowa (A) Minnesota (A)	Wisconsin (H) Northwestern (A) Ohio State (H) Wisconsin (A) Ohio State (A) Illinois (H) Iowa (H) Indiana (A)
Purdue	3-4	Penn State (H) Michigan (H) Illinois (H)	Minnesota (A) Indiana (A) Wisconsin (A) Michigan (A)	Ohio State (H) Penn State (A) Michigan State (H) Ohio State (A) Indiana (H) Iowa (A) Northwestern (A) Minnesota (H) Northwestern (H)
Wisconsin	7-0	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)

Wisconsin continues to beat everyone, home and away, but Ohio State is keeping pace. Indiana, Michigan, and Michigan State are still in the race, but they're fading. Purdue, Iowa, and Illinois don't really stand much chance, but they can battle for better seeding in the Big Ten Tournament.

Here's a breakdown of the remaining games for the contenders, in alphabetical order:

	Tough Games		Easy Games	
Team	Home	Away	Home	Away
Indiana	Wisconsin Illinois	Iowa Michigan Michigan State	Minnesota Penn State	Purdue Northwestern
Michigan	Iowa Indiana Michigan State Ohio State	Ohio State Michigan State Illinois	Minnesota	Minnesota
Michigan State	Ohio State Michigan Iowa Wisconsin Indiana	Illinois Michigan Wisconsin		Purdue
Ohio State	Michigan Wisconsin	Michigan State Michigan	Purdue Penn State	Purdue Penn State Minnesota
Wisconsin	Iowa	Indiana	Northwestern	Penn State

	Michigan State	Michigan State Ohio State	Penn State	Minnesota

Looking at this breakdown, it appears that Ohio State still has the easiest remaining schedule, with 5 "easy" games, and only 4 "tough" games. Wisconsin and Indiana are tied for the next easiest remaining schedules, with 4 easy games and 5 tough games. Michigan has the next easiest remaining schedule, with 2 easy games, and 7 tough games. Michigan State has the toughest remaining schedule, with only 1 easy game and 8 tough games left.

The Upcoming Week

As you can see in the schedule above, Michigan only has one game this week. On Wednesday (01/31/2007, 8:00 p.m.), they play Iowa in Crisler Arena. Come on down and cheer on the Wolverines.

Go Blue!