03/26/2007 – Week #22 – Season Wrap-Up, Final Grades, Looking Ahead

Season Wrap-Up

In general, it was a disappointing season for the University of Michigan men's basketball team. On the one hand, they ended up with a pretty respectable record (22-13 overall, 8-8 in the Big Ten), and they beat some good teams, but on the other hand, they failed to make it to the NCAA Tournament again, which cost head coach Tommy Amaker his job.

Once again, Michigan folded down the stretch. Just like last season, when they fumbled away a 16-3 start by losing 7 out of the next 9 games, this season's team threw away a 16-4 start with 8 losses in their next 13 games. Just like last season, they got into the National Invitation Tournament (NIT), but unlike last season, when they lost in the finals, this season's team only won once (at home vs. Utah State) before losing on the road to Florida State.

The saddest part about the way the season ended is that this year's senior class (Lester Abram, Dion Harris, Brent Petway, and Courtney Sims) deserved a lot better, just like last year's. This was another good senior class, and they had the misfortune to be on another hard-luck team that just barely missed making the Big Dance. If they could have won the Iowa game on 01/31/2007, they probably would have made it, but they didn't.

Here are the final 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	55-92	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	L	62-69	16-7 (4-4)
02/06/2007 (Tue)	Ohio State	Columbus, OH	L	63-76	16-8 (4-5)
02/10/2007 (Sat)	Minnesota	Ann Arbor	W	82-80	17-8 (5-5)
02/13/2007 (Tue)	Michigan State	East Lansing, MI	L	44-59	17-9 (5-6)

Date	Opponent	Site	Result	Score	Record
02/17/2007 (Sat)	Indiana	Ann Arbor	W	58-55	18-9 (6-6)
02/21/2007 (Wed)	Illinois	Champaign, IL	L	42-54	18-10 (6-7)
02/24/2007 (Sat)	Minnesota	Minneapolis, MN	W	62-51	19-10 (7-7)
02/27/2007 (Tue)	Michigan State	Ann Arbor	W	67-56	20-10 (8-7)
03/03/2007 (Sat)	Ohio State	Ann Arbor	L	61-65	20-11 (8-8)
Big Ten Tournament					
03/08/2007 (Thu)	Round 1 – Minnesota	Chicago, IL	W	49-40	21-11
03/09/2007 (Fri)	Round 2 – Ohio State	Chicago, IL	L	62-72	21-12
National Invitation Tournament (NIT)					
03/13/2007 (Tue)	Round 1 – Utah State	Ann Arbor	W	68-58	22-12
03/15/2007 (Thu)	Round 2 – Florida State	Tallahassee, FL	L	66-87	22-13

As you can see, UM peaked in late January, when they were 16-4 (4-1 in the Big Ten). From that point on, they lost 9 out of their next 15 games. Several of those losses were predictable and forgivable (at Wisconsin, all three games against Ohio State, at Michigan State, at Illinois), but two of them were toss-up games (home vs. Indiana, home vs. Iowa), and those were the losses that kept Michigan out of the Big Dance.

Good/Bad Wins/Losses

Not all wins are good wins, and not all losses are bad losses. Sure, a win is a win, and a loss is a loss, but some wins can be discouraging, and some losses can be encouraging. I know, Michigan doesn't believe in "moral victories" in any of their sports, but I do. Therefore, I've gone back over the season, and found the good and bad wins, and the good and bad losses:

Good wins

Date	Opponent	Location	Score	Comments
11/11/2006	Davidson	Ann Arbor	78-68	Davidson was a pretty good team, and they made it to the NCAA Tournament.
12/07/2006	Miami (OH)	Oxford, OH	62-56	Won on the road, against another team that made it to the NCAA Tournament.
01/03/2007	Illinois	Ann Arbor	71-61	It's always great to win the Big Ten opener, especially against yet another team that made it to the NCAA Tournament.
01/06/2007	Northwestern	Evanston, IL	58-46	It's tough to win on the road in the Big Ten, even at Northwestern.
01/20/2007	Purdue	Ann Arbor	71-55	This was the win that put UM at 16-4, and it came against another NCAA Tournament team.
02/17/2007	(#24) Indiana	Ann Arbor	58-55	This was Michigan's only win against a ranked team this season. IU was another team that made it to the NCAA Tournament.
02/27/2007	Michigan State	Ann Arbor	67-56	It's always a great win when Michigan beats MSU, even when they're "down", like they were this year. Still, they're another NCAA Tournament team.

Good losses

Date	Opponent	Location	Score	Comments
12/30/2006	Georgetown	Ann Arbor	51-67	This game was close most of the way. At the time, Georgetown wasn't ranked, but they ended up finishing the season strong, and made it to the Elite Eight.
03/03/2007	(#1) Ohio State	Ann Arbor	61-65	Michigan had a 6-point lead with 4:00 to go, before OSU went on a 10-0 run to end the game. OSU made it to the Final Four.
03/09/2007	(#1) Ohio State	Chicago, IL	62-72	Michigan hung in there most of the game, and played OSU the toughest of any of the teams in the Big Ten Tournament.

Bad wins

Date	Opponent	Location	Score	Comments
02/10/2007	Minnesota	Ann Arbor	82-80	Michigan had a nice lead, and should have beaten them handily, but fell apart at the end and just squeaked by.

Bad losses

Date	Opponent	Location	Score	Comments
11/27/2006	North Carolina State	Raleigh, NC	67-74	This was a sign of things to come. It was UM's first road game, and their first loss. They had a nice lead early, then they disappeared.
12/23/2006	(#1) UCLA	Los Angeles, CA	55-92	This was a slaughter. Of course, UCLA was ranked #1 at the time, and they did make it to the Final Four, but still.
01/13/2007	Purdue	West Lafayette, IN	53-67	Michigan should have beaten them, even on the road.
01/31/2007	Iowa	Ann Arbor	62-69	This is the one that cost Michigan a bid to the NCAA Tournament, and Tommy Amaker his job. Michigan should have won this one.
03/15/2007	Florida State	Tallahassee, FL	66-87	The Wolverines played like they didn't care, and they lost big to a team that they could have beaten.

As you can see, there are a lot more "Good Wins" than anything else, and only 5 "Bad Losses". However, that one bad loss to Iowa ruined the whole season.

Season Statistics

The Athletic Department publishes complete statistics after every game, and they're very thorough and complete. They're also a bit much to digest. Here are the "stats lite" for this season.

First, let's look at the team shooting statistics for the season:

Team	Field goals	3-Pointers	Free throws
Michigan	791-1779 (44.5%)	170-495 (34.3%)	497-683 (72.8%)
Opponents	752-1823 (41.3%)	204-584 (34.9%)	408-570 (71.6%)
Advantage	**Michigan**	**Opponents**	**Michigan**

These stats are very positive. Sure, the other guys made more 3-pointers, but Michigan made more baskets overall. It's impressive that UM made almost 100 more free throws than their opponents are.

Next, let's check out the team non-shooting statistics for the season:

Team	Rebounds	Assists	Turnovers	Blocks	Steals
Michigan	1231	478	520	200	190
Opponents	1020	447	460	105	209
Advantage	**Mich**	**Mich**	**Opp**	**Mich**	**Opp**

On the positive side, Michigan had almost twice as many blocks as their opponents. On the other hand, it's a little disappointing that UM had more turnovers than assists. Those turnovers cost Michigan a couple of the games they could have won.

Now, let's look at the individual shooting stats for the season:

Player	Field Goals	3-Pointers	Free Throws	Points	
				Total	Per Game
Lester Abram	108-249 (0.434)	22-74 (0.297)	81-104 (0.779)	319	9.1
Reed Baker	21-65 (0.323)	17-48 (0.354)	12-15 (0.800)	71	2.5
Ron Coleman	77-168 (0.458)	27-79 (0.342)	18-25 (0.720)	199	5.7
Phillip DeVries	0-0 (0.000)	0-0 (0.000)	0-0 (0.000)	0	0.0
Dion Harris	147-392 (0.375)	72-201 (0.358)	103-120 (0.858)	469	13.4
David Merritt	2-4 (0.500)	1-1 (1.000)	0-0 (0.000)	5	1.3
K'Len Morris	3-9 (0.333)	0-3 (0.000)	1-2 (0.500)	7	1.0
Brent Petway	93-154 (0.604)	0-0 (0.000)	52-82 (0.634)	238	6.8
Kendric Price	4-7 (0.571)	0-0 (0.000)	1-4 (0.250)	9	1.1
Jevohn Shepherd	19-58 (0.328)	3-14 (0.214)	13-26 (0.500)	54	1.9
Courtney Sims	143-251 (0.570)	0-0 (0.000)	115-159 (0.723)	401	11.5
DeShawn Sims	40-120 (0.333)	0-7 (0.000)	33-50 (0.660)	113	3.4
Jerret Smith	58-140 (0.414)	28-65 (0.431)	44-55 (0.800)	188	5.7
Ekpe Udoh	76-162 (0.469)	0-3 (0.000)	24-41 (0.585)	176	5.0

Forget about the subs and scrubs, and look at the "regular" players. Brent Petway shot 60.4%, which is very good. Courtney Sims shot 57.0%, Ekpe Udoh shot 46.9%, Ron Coleman shot 45.8%, Lester Abram shot 43.4%, and Jerret Smith shot 41.4%. Only Dion Harris failed to crack 40%.

It was a little discouraging that Michigan didn't have much scoring balance this season, with only 2 players averaging in double figures.

Finally, let's check out the individual non-shooting stats for the season:

Player	Rebounds	Assists	Turnovers	Blocks	Steals

Lester Abram	133	74	66	9	31
Reed Baker	13	12	21	0	6
Ron Coleman	108	39	31	5	8
Phillip DeVries	1	0	0	0	0
Dion Harris	84	127	97	3	38
David Merritt	3	2	1	0	1
K'Len Morris	2	1	2	0	3
Brent Petway	205	35	53	52	22
Kendric Price	7	1	5	1	1
Jevohn Shepherd	47	17	24	3	8
Courtney Sims	218	19	76	46	17
DeShawn Sims	75	11	15	10	8
Jerret Smith	89	112	87	4	24
Ekpe Udoh	139	28	28	67	23

These stats are fine. The point guards (Horton and Smith) had more assists than turnovers, and the big guys all had more than 100 rebounds each.

Team Honors

Regardless of the awards announced at the Basketball Bust, here are my awards for this year's team:

Most Valuable Player: Dion Harris

Best Defensive Player: Jevohn Shepherd

Most Hustle: Brent Petway

Most Improved: Jerret Smith

Best Dunker (ever): Brent Petway

Final Grades

It's time for final grades for the team, and (ex)Coach Amaker:

Name	Midterm Grade	Final Grade	Comments
Freshmen			
Reed Baker	B-	B-	Reed was pretty inconsistent, which isn't unusual for a true freshman. When he was "on", he had a great 3-point shot. When he was "off", forget it. He's a little slow on defense, and he is still hesitant when he runs the point.
K'Len Morris	Inc.	Inc.	K'Len looked pretty good in the 7 games he played in, before he re-injured his problem shoulder. He had surgery on it, and he was out for the rest of the season. I still haven't heard if he was granted a medical redshirt year. If he is redshirted, he will still have 4 years of eligibility left next season.

Kendric Price	Inc.	Inc.	Kendric has only played in 8 games, for a total of 22 minutes. He has scored a total of 9 points. He has great athletic ability, but still needs some work on his overall game.
DeShawn Sims	B	B+	DeShawn had a slow start, but he got better as the season went on. He's turning into a force underneath, which is something Michigan desperately needs.
Ekpe Udoh	B+	B+	Ekpe has been a nice surprise. He was the most consistent of the freshmen, and he continued to improve all season. He has great shot-blocking instincts, and a nice little jumper.
Anthony Wright	Inc.	Inc.	Anthony was redshirted this season, and will still have 4 years of eligibility left next season.
Sophomores			
Phillip DeVries	Inc.	Inc.	Phil only played in 1 game, for a total of 3 minutes. He didn't attempt a shot. He is on the team as a practice player, so he doesn't get into the games much.
Jevohn Shepherd	B-	B-	Jevohn has shown flashes of his athletic ability, but he still hasn't displayed much of a complete game.
Jerret Smith	B-	B+	For most of the season, Jerret looked like he didn't belong out there, then Amaker figured out how to use him effectively, and he became a very important member of the team.
Juniors			
Ron Coleman	B-	C+	Ron started the season strong, then he disappeared. Once he lost his starting job, he didn't have many strong outings.
David Merritt	Inc.	Inc.	David only played in 4 games, for a total of 29 minutes. He did manage to score 5 points. He is on the team as a practice player, so he doesn't get into the games much.
Seniors			
Lester Abram	B-	C+	Les had a pretty disappointing senior season. He had a few good games, but most of the time he was pretty ineffective out there.
Dion Harris	B-	B	Dion has always had a low shooting percentage, but he had any even tougher time than usual this season. He ran the point pretty well, but he did even better when Jerret Smith ran the point and Dion switched to shooting guard.
Brent Petway	B+	B	Brent was more effective coming off the bench as a "sparkplug" the last 3 seasons. This season, he was a starter, and he played well enough, but he didn't fire the team and the crowd up as much.

Courtney Sims	C+	C+	Inch for inch, Courtney is the softest big man in the country. When he played tough, which wasn't very often, he did very well, but he had a bad tendency to disappear out there.
Coach			
Tommy Amaker	B-	C+	He never managed to get "over the hump", and it cost him his job.

As you can see, almost all the grades went down, even though the disappointing finish to the season wasn't any one player's fault. It was a team effort.

Looking Ahead

It's hard to tell what the future holds for Michigan. A lot of it depends on who the next coach is. It also depends on whether or not all the current recruits decide to honor their commitments and come to Michigan. Currently, only one of the recruits (Alex Legion) has definitely said that he'll be coming to Michigan next year. The other two (Manny Harris and Kelvin Grady) are still up in the air.

If Michigan gets a good coach, and if all 3 of the current recruits come to Michigan, the future looks reasonably bright for next season. Sure, Michigan is losing 4 important players (Abram, Harris, Petway, and Courtney Sims), but there are plenty of talented young players waiting for playing time.

Here's a quick look at the 3 recruits:

Kelvin Grady
5'11", 170 pounds, G
Grand Rapids, MI

He's a little short for Big Ten ball, and he's not much of a scorer, but he's a good point guard and a scrappy defender. He's also the younger brother of Kevin Grady, a tailback on the UM football team.

Corperryale "Manny" Harris
6'5", 170 pounds, G
Detroit, MI

He's a great shooter and scorer, and this year's Mr. Basketball.

Alex Legion
6'5", 185 pounds, W
Detroit, MI

He's also a great scorer, and he can drive to the hoop with authority.

Besides the 3 recruits, there are also going to be at least 4 more players on the roster who weren't available at the end of this season:

K'Len Morris
6' 4", 185 pounds, W

K'Len missed all but 7 games, due to a shoulder injury and surgery. If he is granted a medical redshirt year for this season, he will still have 4 years of eligibility left.

Anthony Wright
6' 6", 235 pounds, F

Anthony was redshirted this season as a freshman. He will still have 4 years of eligibility left.

Zack Gibson
6' 10", 220 pounds, C

Zack is a transfer from Rutgers, where he didn't play much during his freshman year. He had to sit out this season, and he'll have 3 years of eligibility left.

C.J. Lee
6' 0", 180 pounds, G

C.J. is the other transfer on the team this year. He played for 2 years at Manhattan College, where he never started, and had miniscule stats. He had to sit out this season, and he'll have 2 years of eligibility left.

As you can see, there is reason to be optimistic. Be sure to check back in November, when I start writing columns for next season. Until then…

Go Blue!