11/05/2007 – Week #02 – A Promising Start

The Week In Review

First of all, how about those football Wolverines, coming back to beat Michigan State in East Lansing on Saturday, 28-24? Go Blue!

Speaking of Sparty, I still can't believe that their 8th-ranked men's basketball team lost their season opening exhibition game to (Division II) Grand Valley State, in Breslin, 85-82 in double overtime. This is roughly the equivalent of Applachian State's win over Michigan in football earlier this season.

Finally, back to the University of Michigan men's basketball team, they only played one (exhibition) game this week, and they won it. On Thursday (11/01/2007), they beat Ferris State (FSU) in Crisler Arena, 78-40. This was Michigan's one and only exhibition game this season.

The Wolverines played well for most of the game, with a bunch of little mistakes, but nothing that can't be corrected. They are trying to learn a whole new offense and defense, and it showed. Still, they did lots of things right, and it was a promising start. It was a game that Michigan should have won, and they did.

It was very interesting seeing Coach Beilein's intricate offense in person. It depends a lot on taking (and hopefully, making) 3-point shots often, which is exciting, especially when it works. It's a much more up-tempo offense than Michigan has run the last few years.

On defense, the 1-3-1 zone looked fairly effective, but FSU didn't have much height, and they weren't very good. Most of the Michigan players did a good zone of defending their zones, and they slid over to help out when needed. Once again, it will take some time for the players to learn all the subtle nuances, but they looked pretty good for their first time out. Of course, Michigan has played zone defense occasionally in the last few years, including some 1-3-1, but they were primarily a man-to-man team. It will take some time to get comfortable with the new defense.

Game Statistics

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

Team	Field goals	3-Pointers	Free throws
Michigan	23-53 (43.4%)	10-28 (35.7%)	22-27 (81.5%)
FSU	15-57 (26.3%)	1-18 (5.6%)	9-12 (75.0%)
Advantage	Michigan	Michigan	Michigan

Michigan didn't just win these stats, they dominated. Look at those 3-point shooting numbers: Michigan shot a very respectable 35.7%, and held FSU to 5.6%. Michigan only shot more than 20 3-pointers 3 times last season, so 28 shots is a big change.

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

Team	Rebounds	Assists	Turnovers	Blocks	Steals
Michigan	41	14	19	7	10
FSU	37	7	23	2	7
Advantage	Michigan	Michigan	Michigan	Michigan	Michigan

Once again, Michigan won the stats battle. The most impressive number here is the 7 Blocks. The 19 Turnovers are a little worrisome, but that comes from running a new offense for the first time.

Individual Statistics

Coach Beilein went with a slightly unusual starting lineup in the FSU game, choosing Zack Gibson over Ekpe Udoh, and K'Len Morris instead of Manny Harris. The other starters were a little more predictable: Ron Coleman, DeShawn Sims, and Jerret Smith.

Here's how they did:

Player	Field Goals	3-Pointers	Free Throws	Points
Ron Coleman	3-4	3-4	2-2	11
Zack Gibson	3-3	0-0	2-3	8
K'Len Morris	2-5	1-3	2-3	7
DeShawn Sims	4-9	3-6	3-4	14
Jerret Smith	1-4	1-4	2-2	5
Totals	13-25 52.0%	8-17 47.1%	11-14 78.6%	45

As a group, the starters did just fine. Their percentages are very good, especially 3-point shooting, and they scored a decent number of points.

Individually, Sims and Coleman both had good games. They shot well, and had 6 of Michigan's 10 3-pointers between them. It is interesting to note that Sims didn't hit a single 3-pointer all last season, but he started the game out by draining a beautiful 3-pointer.

Gibson and Morris also had good games. Gibson looked solid and comfortable out there, and Morris looked completely recovered from his season-ending shoulder surgery from last season. Morris led the starters with 5 rebounds.

Smith did an OK job running the point, when he was in, and he even chipped in a few points. He did have 4 turnovers, but he'll work on that.

This was only an exhibition game, so Coach Beilein probably used more bench players, and more combinations, than he will in a real game. In all, 9 bench players got to play. Here's how they did:

Player	Field Goals	3-Pointers	Free Throws	Points
Adam Block	0-0	0-0	0-0	0
Kelvin Grady	1-7	1-5	0-0	3
Manny Harris	4-9	0-2	7-9	15
C.J. Lee	0-0	0-0	2-2	2
David Merritt	0-0	0-0	0-0	0
Eric Puls	1-1	0-0	0-0	2
Jevohn Shepherd	1-5	0-2	0-0	2
Ekpe Udoh	1-2	0-0	2-2	4
Anthony Wright	2-4	1-2	0-0	5
Totals	10-28 35.7%	2-11 18.2%	11-13 84.6%	33

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

Individually, Harris was the star of the game. Even though he didn't start, he was the best player out there. Sure, he made some freshman mistakes, but he also made lots of dazzling plays. Besides being the leading scorer, he was also the leading rebounder, with 9.

None of the other bench players did very much. Wright probably looked the best of them. He looked pretty steady out there, and he showed a lot of hustle. Grady and Shepherd both forced a lot of shots, and didn't look comfortable out there yet. Udoh was too tentative. The rest of the bench players got less than 5 minutes each, so they didn't have much of a chance to do anything.

The Big Picture

The one-game exhibition portion of the schedule is over. Now we'll see how good Michigan is against real competition.

Here's the 2007-2008 schedule/results:

Date	Opponent	Site	Result	Score	Record
11/01/2007 (Thu)	Ferris State (exhibition)	Ann Arbor	W	78-40	0-0
11/09/2007 (Fri)	Radford	Ann Arbor			
11/11/2007 (Sun)	Brown	Ann Arbor			
11/15/2007 (Thu)	Georgetown	Washington, D.C.			
Carrs/Safeway Great Alaska Shootout					
11/21/2007 (Wed)	Butler	Anchorage, Alaska			
11/23/2007 (Fri)	Eastern Washington or Virginia Tech	Anchorage, Alaska			
11/24/2007 (Sat)	Championship Round	Anchorage, Alaska			
ACC/Big Ten Challenge					
11/28/2007 (Wed)	Boston College	Ann Arbor			
12/01/2007 (Sat)	Harvard	Boston, Mass.			
12/08/2007 (Sat)	Duke	Durham, N.C.			
12/12/2007 (Wed)	Oakland	Ann Arbor			
12/15/2007 (Sat)	Central Michigan	Ann Arbor			
12/22/2007 (Sat)	UCLA	Ann Arbor			
01/02/2008 (Wed)	Wisconsin	Ann Arbor			
01/05/2008 (Sat)	Purdue	West Lafayette, Ind.			
01/08/2008 (Tue)	Indiana	Ann Arbor			
01/12/2008 (Sat)	Northwestern	Evanston, Ill.			
01/16/2008 (Wed)	Illinois	Champaign, Ill.			
01/19/2008 (Sat)	Iowa	Ann Arbor			
01/22/2008 (Tue)	Wisconsin	Madison, Wis.			
01/27/2008 (Sun)	Michigan State	East Lansing, Mich.			
01/31/2008 (Thu)	Minnesota	Ann Arbor			
02/05/2008 (Tue)	Ohio State	Columbus, Ohio			
02/09/2008 (Sat)	Penn State	Ann Arbor			
02/14/2008 (Thu)	Iowa	Iowa City, Iowa			
02/17/2008 (Sun)	Ohio State	Ann Arbor			
02/21/2008 (Thu)	Minnesota	Minneapolis, Minn.			
02/23/2008 (Sat) or 02/24/2008 (Sun)	Illinois	Ann Arbor			
02/26/2008 (Tue)	Northwestern	Ann Arbor			
03/01/2008 (Sat)	Penn State	State College, Pa.			

Date	Opponent	Site	Result	Score	Record
03/08/2008 (Sat) or 03/09/2008 (Sun)	Purdue	Ann Arbor			
Big Ten Tournament					
03/13/2008 (Thu)	First Round	Indianapolis, Ind.			
03/14/2008 (Fri)	Quarterfinal	Indianapolis, Ind.			
03/15/2008 (Sat)	Semifinal	Indianapolis, Ind.			
03/16/2008 (Sun)	Championship	Indianapolis, Ind.			

The Upcoming Week

As you can see in the schedule above, Michigan has two games this week. On Friday (11/09/2007, 7:00 p.m.), they play Radford, then on Sunday (11/11/2007, noon), they play Brown. Both games are in Crisler Arena. These are both very winnable games. Come on down to Crisler Arena and cheer on the Wolverines. If you do, stop by Section 8/11 (the sections I usher) to say hi.

Go Blue!