11/19/2007 – Week #04 – Back To Reality

The Week In Review

The University of Michigan men's basketball team only played one game this week, and they lost it. On Thursday (11/15/2007), they lost at (#5) Georgetown, 74-52. The loss leaves Michigan with a record of 2-1.

After opening the season with an easy exhibition win over Ferris State, and two easy regular season wins over Radford and Brown, it was good for Michigan to play a really tough team, on the road, to see where they really stood. So, where do they really stand? They're not as good as they appeared in the easy home wins, but they're not bad at all, especially for such a young team.

I know you'll all be surprised to know that I don't actually go to the away games, but it's true. If the game is on TV, I watch it, otherwise I just listen to it on the radio. The Georgetown game was only on something called ESPN-360, which I couldn't get, and on the radio.

For the Georgetown game, I decided to try something new while I listened to the game: I wrote down my impressions and reactions at key moments, sort of a "delayed blog". Here's what I wrote during the game, with the time of day in parentheses:

(7:35) Just before tip-off. I'm expecting a tough game, and possibly a blow-out win for GU. I'm afraid that Hibbert will be too much for UM. While Michigan has some good players, I don't think they can defend against Hibbert.

(7:39) 16:58 left. A quick UM timeout, down 9-0. Ouch.

(7:40) 15:49 left. Finally, UM scored. Gibson for 2, 12-2.

(7:42) First official timeout. 14:59 left in the half. Down 15-5. Not the kind of start UM needed. Manny Harris hit a 3.

(7:48) Another official timeout. 11:45 left. Down 26-7. Everything is working for GU, nothing is working for UM. The crowd is into it. Harris has 5 of UM's 7 points. Too many turnovers, zero rebounds. 2 fouls on Sims.

(7:56) 7:45 left. Wright hit a 3-pointer, and UM finally hit double figures, 28-12.

(7:57) Another official timeout. 7:16 left. Down 30-12. Hibbert only has 4 points.

(8:02) 5:00 left. 34-17. 5 quick points for UM to get to within "only" 17.

(8:03) Jam by Sims waved off, offensive goaltending. Might have been a bad call.

(8:05) Another timeout. 2:39 left. Down 36-17. 8 for Hibbert. Too many airballs (5) for UM.

(8:10) The game is getting away. 41-17.

(8:11) Halftime. Down 43-19. Wright and Harris with 5 each. Too many turnovers, too many airballs. UM appears to be flustered. 23-14 rebounds. GU had one foul in the 1st half. Some other halftime stats: UM shooting 32.0% (8-25), GU at 51.4% (18-35). 3-pointers are even worse: UM = 27.3% (3-11), GU = 63.6% (7-11).

(8:27) Start of the 2nd half. The first 5:00 will tell. If UM can cut into the lead at all, it might not be a blow-out. Bad start, missed on 1st possession.

(8:28) 19:05 left. GU hits a 3-pointer, 46-19.

(8:29) 18:29 left. Grady hits a 3-pointer, 46-22.

(8:31) 17:22 left. Hibbert just hit his 10th point. 48-24.

(8:33) 15:47 left. Timeout. 50-24. The deficit has grown, not shrunk. Ugh.

(8:35) 15:36 left. Grady up to 10 points, 52-26.

(8:37) 14:21 left. Grady hits 12. 52-28.

(8:38) 13:15 left. Another 2 for Grady (14), 52-30.

(8:41) 11:15 left. Timeout. 57-33. Same deficit as halftime. No chance to win this one, still possible to avoid a blow-out.

(8:45) 10:23 left. Another airball. That's 7. Ugh. 59-33.

(8:45) 10:02 left. UM timeout. 61-33. Nothing's working for UM.

(8:49) 8:45 left. Another easy stuff for GU. Macklin, not Hibbert. 63-37.

(8:52) 7:59 left. Timeout. 63-38. The 2 freshmen are doing OK, the rest of the team, not so much. 32-20 rebounds.

(8:58) 5:38 left. 16 points for Grady. He's the only player doing anything. 63-42.

(8:59) 4:30 left. Timeout. 65-44.

(9:01) 3:59 left. Another timeout. 67-44. Not even a miracle could win this one. Macklin just had another dunk.

(9:05) 3:00 left. GU is pulling away, 72-45.

(9:07) 2:10 left. UM timeout. 74-47. At least UM got more than 40 points.

(9:12) Game over. 74-52. 1st loss. Not too surprising.

I was hoping for a little more drama. It's not easy describing a near-blowout loss. I don't consider this to be a blowout, but it was close to one.

Game Statistics

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

Team	Field goals	3-Pointers	Free throws
Michigan	21-57 (36.8%)	5-18 (27.8%)	5-10 (50.0%)
Georgetown	31-66 (47.0%)	10-19 (52.6%)	2-4 (50.0%)
Advantage	Georgetown	Georgetown	Even

Georgetown dominated these stats, which is why they won the game by 22 points. Michigan's overall shooting percentage isn't too bad, but the numbers for 3-point shooting and free-throw shooting are lousy.

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

Team	Rebounds	Assists	Turnovers	Blocks	Steals
Michigan	31	6	14	3	4
Georgetown	45	18	11	8	6
Advantage	G'town	G'town	G'town	G'town	G'town

Once again, Georgetown dominated the stats battle, especially the rebounding edge. The 14 Turnovers for Michigan were pretty disappointing.

Season 3-Point Shooting

As I said in last week's column, I consider 3-point shooting percentage to be the most important stat this season, so I'm going to track it all season:

Date	Opponent	3-Point Shooting	Result
11/09/2007 (Fri)	Radford	7-23 (30.4%)	W
11/11/2007 (Sun)	Brown	12-24 (50.0%)	W
11/15/2007 (Thu)	At Georgetown	5-18 (27.8%)	L
Totals		24-65 (36.9%)	

I still maintain that Michigan will win most of the games when they shoot more than 40%, but I need to add another condition: they need to take at least 20 3-pointers to win. They fell short on both accounts in the Georgetown game.

Individual Statistics

I need to correct something I said in last week's column: I said that Jerret Smith missed the Brown game because he was serving a one-game disciplinary suspension, due to class attendance problems. This was not the case; he missed the Brown game because his ankle was still injured. His ankle was finally healed for the Georgetown game, so that was the game that he missed to serve his suspension. In his absence, Coach Beilein started Kelvin Grady, and went with the rest of his regular starting lineup: Ron Coleman, Zack Gibson, Manny Harris, and DeShawn Sims. Here's how they did:

Player	Field Goals	3-Pointers	Free Throws	Points
Ron Coleman	0-5	0-2	0-0	0
Zack Gibson	1-4	0-1	0-0	2
Kelvin Grady	7-10	2-3	0-0	16
Manny Harris	5-14	1-4	2-2	13
DeShawn Sims	0-4	0-1	1-2	1
Totals	13-37 35.1%	3-11 27.3%	3-4 75.0%	32

As a group, the starters didn't do very well. Their percentages are pretty bad, and they didn't score very many points.

Individually, the freshmen (Grady and Harris) were the stars. Grady shot well, and Harris shot pretty well. Between them, they scored 29 of Michigan's 52 points (55.8%).

The other 3 starters combined for 3 points, on 1-for-13 shooting. Michigan needed balanced scoring, which they didn't get. They also needed some tough interior defense from Gibson, which they didn't get. Michigan is undersized this year, so the closest things they have to true "big" men (Gibson and Ekpe Udoh) need to overachieve, both offensively and defensively. They didn't.

Since the game was out of reach most of the game, Coach Beilein probably used more bench players than he will in a close game. In all, 6 bench players got to play. Here's how they did:

Player	Field Goals	3-Pointers	Free Throws	Points
C.J. Lee	0-2	0-1	1-2	1
David Merritt	0-1	0-1	0-0	0
K'Len Morris	1-1	1-1	0-0	3
Jevohn Shepherd	2-6	0-1	0-2	4
Ekpe Udoh	2-3	0-0	1-2	5
Anthony Wright	3-7	1-3	0-0	7
Totals	8-18 44.4%	2-7 28.6%	2-6 33.3%	20

As a group, the bench players did OK. Their shooting percentages are acceptable, except for free throws, and they did chip in a few points.

Individually, no one stood out, but no one played very poorly. Merritt only played 2 minutes, and Lee only played 6 minutes, but the other bench players chipped in nicely.

The Big Picture

The Georgetown game was a good indication of where Michigan really stands. UM has some talented young players, and they're running an exciting new offense and defense, but they still have a lot of work left to do. They don't have the talent or the polish necessary to beat an elite team like Georgetown, on the road, with less than a perfect game. They do have the talent to beat anyone on their schedule, but only if they overachieve.

Next up for the Wolverines is the Great Alaska Shootout, in Anchorage, Alaska. There are several good teams in the tournament, including Michigan's 1st round opponent: (#25) Butler.

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	W	82-55	1-0
11/11/2007 (Sun)	Brown	Ann Arbor	W	72-57	2-0
11/15/2007 (Thu)	Georgetown	Washington, D.C.	L	74-52	2-1
Carrs/Safeway Great Alaska Shootout					
11/21/2007 (Wed)	Butler	Anchorage, Alaska			
11/23/2007 (Fri)	Eastern Washington or	Anchorage, Alaska			

Date	Opponent	Site	Result	Score	Record
	Virginia Tech				
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.			
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 three games next week, in the Great Alaska Shootout. Since it's a tournament, the only opponent that has been scheduled is (#25) Butler, at 11:30 p.m. EST (7:30 p.m. Alaska time) on Wednesday (11/21/2007). The rest of the tournament schedule depends on who wins and loses. Check the tournament website and Michigan's website for the game times and opponents for the games on Friday and Saturday, then check back here next week to see what happened, and why.

Go Blue!