11/26/2007 – Week #05 – A Long Week A Long Way From Home

The Week In Review

The University of Michigan men's basketball team played three games this week, in the Great Alaska Shootout. They won one game, and lost two, which isn't very good. On Wednesday (11/21/2007), they lost to (#22) Butler, 79-65, then on Friday (11/23/2007), they beat Eastern Washington, 61-53. Finally, on Saturday (11/24/2007), they lost to Western Kentucky, 73-69. Michigan's record is now 3-3.

Once again, I have to confess that I didn't actually go to Anchorage to attend the games in person. I watched the Butler game on TV, and listened to the other two games on the radio.

The Butler game was pretty discouraging. Michigan fell behind early (17 points down), but they battled back to get within 8 at halftime. They opened the 2nd half strong, and got within 1 point, but that was it. Butler started hitting 3-pointers, and they pulled away to win by 24 points. When Butler put on their run, Michigan's defense was powerless to stop them. The offense wasn't too bad, but the defense was weak.

The Eastern Washington game was a lot better. The teams traded baskets early, but Michigan took charge, and built up a nice 13-point lead at halftime. EWU chipped away at the lead during the entire 2nd half, and got within one point with less than 2 minutes to go, before Michigan hit enough of their free throws to win the game. The defense was a lot better in this one.

The final game, against Western Kentucky was pretty exciting. Once again, the teams traded baskets early, but WKU pulled away and led by 13 at halftime. UM cut into the lead a little in the 2nd half, and made their move with about 6 minutes left. They got the deficit down to two points in the final minute, but they couldn't pull out the win. Still, it was encouraging to see the Wolverines battle back, and make a game of it.

All in all, the tournament was good experience for a young team. They got to play a lot of basketball in a short amount of time, and they got a chance to bond, spending a week together in a strange place. It's just too bad they couldn't win at least 2 games.

Game Statistics

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

Team	Field goals	3-Pointers	Free throws
Michigan	21-47 (44.7%)	8-20 (40.0%)	15-19 (78.9%)
Butler	25-55 (45.5%)	17-32 (53.1%)	12-15 (80.0%)
Advantage	Butler	Butler	Even

Butler dominated these stats, which is why they won the game by 24 points. Michigan's percentages are actually quite good, but Butler shot even better, including a tournament-record 17 3-pointers made.

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

Team	Rebounds	Assists	Turnovers	Blocks	Steals
Michigan	30	10	12	7	4
Butler	29	19	7	0	3

Advantage	Michigan	Butler	Butler	Michigan	Michigan

It's amazing to think that Michigan (narrowly) out-rebounded Butler, had more steals, and had a lot more blocks, but still lost the game by 24 points. That just shows what 3-point shooting can do.

Next, let's look at the shooting statistics from the EWU game:

Team	Field goals	3-Pointers	Free throws
Michigan	19-54 (35.2%)	10-27 (37.0%)	13-15 (86.7%)
Eastern Washington	19-60 (31.7%)	8-24 (33.3%)	7-9 (77.8%)
Advantage	Michigan	Michigan	Michigan

Michigan won all these stats, but just barely. The biggest difference was the 6 extra free throws made.

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

Team	Rebounds	Assists	Turnovers	Blocks	Steals
Michigan	36	14	9	7	5
Eastern Washington	36	14	10	1	4
Advantage	Even	Even	EWU	Michigan	Michigan

These stats are very close, except for Blocks (again). The difference in the game was Michigan's free throw shooting.

On to the Western Kentucky game, and the shooting statistics:

Team	Field goals	3-Pointers	Free throws
Michigan	25-52 (48.1%)	5-17 (29.4%)	14-23 (60.9%)
Western Kentucky	31-54 (57.4%)	6-14 (42.9%)	5-7 (71.4%)
Advantage	WKU	WKU	WKU

These stats are pretty close, which makes sense, since the game was close. WKU shot better from the field, but UM made a lot more free throws. It almost balanced out, but not quite.

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

Team	Rebounds	Assists	Turnovers	Blocks	Steals
Michigan	30	14	18	3	10
Western Kentucky	23	17	18	4	9
Advantage	Michigan	WKU	Even	WKU	Michigan

It's hard to believe that Michigan out-rebounded WKU by 7 rebounds and still lost.

Season 3-Point Shooting

Here's my theory: Michigan should win a game if they can shoot at least 20 3-pointers, and hit at least 40% of them. Of course, they can still win the game when they shoot less than 20 3-pointers, or when they hit less than 40% of them. I'm just saying that they should win the game if they do shoot 20 and make 40%. Let's see how they that works this season:

Date	Opponent	3-Point Shooting	Fits Theory?
11/09/2007 (Fri)	Radford	7-23 (30.4%)	N/A
11/11/2007 (Sun)	Brown	12-24 (50.0%)	Yes
11/15/2007 (Thu)	At Georgetown	5-18 (27.8%)	Yes
11/21/2007 (Wed)	Butler (neutral site)	8-20 (40.0%)	No
11/23/2007 (Fri)	Eastern Washington (neutral site)	10-27 (37.0%)	N/A
11/24/2007 (Sat)	Western Kentucky (neutral site)	5-17 (29.4%)	Yes
Totals		40-106 (37.7%)	3-1

So far, my theory is holding up OK. Michigan has only lost one game (Butler) where they did shoot 40%, and take 20 shots. They have won two games (Radford and EWU) when they didn't shoot at least 40%.

Individual Statistics

Even though Jerret Smith was finally available, after missing the first two games (Radford and Brown) with an ankle injury, and the Georgetown game with a one-game disciplinary suspension, Coach Beilein continued to start Kelvin Grady in his place. The rest of the starting lineup was unchanged (Ron Coleman, Zack Gibson, Manny Harris, and DeShawn Sims). Here's how they did:

	Field Goals			3-Pointers			Free Throws			Points		
Player	BU	EWU	WKU	BU	EWU	WKU	BU	EWU	WKU	BU	EWU	WKU
Ron Coleman	4-6	4-12	5-11	3-4	2-5	0-4	1-2	4-5	0-0	12	14	10
Zack Gibson	1-1	3-4	5-6	0-0	0-1	1-1	0-0	2-2	0-0	2	8	11
Kelvin Grady	1-6	1-3	0-0	1-4	1-2	0-0	2-2	0-0	0-0	5	3	0
Manny Harris	3-10	5-10	4-14	1-4	4-6	0-4	5-6	5-6	14-19	12	19	22
DeShawn Sims	5-7	0-5	7-12	2-4	0-1	2-4	2-3	0-0	0-1	14	0	16
Totals	14-30 46.6%	13-34 38.2%	21-43 48.8%	7-16 43.8%	7-15 46.7%	3-13 23.1%	10-13 76.9%	11-13 84.6%	14-20 70.0%	45	44	59

As a group, the starters did pretty well. Their percentages are pretty good, except for 3-point shooting in the WKU game, and they scored a reasonable number of points.

Individually, Harris was the star. He hit double figures in all three games, and he shot a decent percentage. He was Michigan's leading scorer in two of the three games.

Coleman was the only other starter to hit double figures in all three games. After a slow start to the season, it was great to see Ron come back strong in this tournament.

The other 3 starters weren't as consistent. Gibson wasn't much of a factor in the Butler game, but he played well in the other two games. He even hit a 3-pointer in the WKU game. Sims had two very good games, but he was bothered by a minor foot injury in the EWU game, and didn't score. Grady looked like a freshman out there all week.

Besides the regular starting five, Coach Beilein seems willing to play the same 6 players off the bench. Here's how they did:

	Field Goals			3-Pointers			Free Throws			Points		
Player	BU	EWU	WKU	BU	EWU	WKU	BU	EWU	WKU	BU	EWU	WKU
C.J. Lee	1-2	1-1	0-0	1-2	1-1	0-0	0-0	0-0	0-0	3	3	0
K'Len Morris	0-1	0-1	0-0	0-1	0-1	0-0	2-2	0-0	0-0	2	0	0
Jevohn Shepherd	1-3	0-2	0-2	0-0	0-1	0-0	0-0	0-0	0-0	2	0	0
Jerret Smith	2-3	1-3	2-2	0-0	1-3	2-2	2-2	2-2	0-0	6	5	6
Ekpe Udoh	3-7	4-7	2-2	0-0	1-2	0-0	0-0	0-0	0-3	6	9	4

Anthony Wright	0-1	0-6	0-3	0-1	0-4	0-2	1-2	0-0	0-0	1	0	0
Totals	7-17 41.2%	6-20 30.0%	4-9 44.4%	1-4 25.0%	3-12 25.0%	2-4 50.0%	5-6 83.3%	2-2 100.0%	0-3 0.0%	20	17	10

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, although Udoh probably contributed the most. Morris, Shepherd, and Wright all had a tough week, with only 5 points between them, all in the Butler game.

The Big Picture

We know a bit more about this season's team, now that they've played 6 games, 4 of them on the road. We know that they are a young team, and that they are still going to make the mistakes that a young team makes. We know that they are still learning a new offense and defense. We know that they have the talent to beat just about anyone, and the inexperience to lose to just about anyone.

So far, they have won the games that they should have won, lost the games that they were expected to lose, and lost the only "toss up" game (WKU) they've played so far.

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	L	79-65	2-2
11/23/2007 (Fri)	Eastern Washington	Anchorage, Alaska	W	61-53	3-2
11/24/2007 (Sat)	Western Kentucky	Anchorage, Alaska	L	73-69	3-3
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	Illinois	Ann Arbor			

Date	Opponent	Site	Result	Score	Record
02/24/2008 (Sun)					
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 two games next week: at home on Wednesday (11/28/2007, 7:15 p.m.) vs. Boston College, and on the road on Saturday (12/01/2007) at Harvard. The Boston College game is part of the ACC/Big Ten Challenge, and it could be a tough one. BC is 4-0, but they haven't played anyone tough yet. The game at Harvard should be interesting, since Harvard is coached by none other than Tommy Amaker, the former Michigan basketball coach. Harvard is currently 2-4, and they were blown out by Stanford in their opener, 111-56, so it could be a winnable road game.

Check back here next week to see what happened, and why.

Go Blue!