12/03/2007 – Week #06 – A Bad Week Against Teams From Boston

The Week In Review

The University of Michigan men's basketball team played two games this week, both against teams from the Boston area, and they lost both of them. On Wednesday (11/28/2007), they lost to Boston College, 77-64, in Crisler Arena, then on Saturday (12/01/2007), they lost at Harvard, 62-51. The two losses lower Michigan's record to 3-5. After winning the first two games, Michigan has now lost 5 of their last 6 games, including the last 3 in a row. This is not good.

The most frustrating part about both losses was that UM could have, and probably should have, won both games. They were evenly matched with BC, and they are clearly better than Harvard, yet they played poorly down the stretch in both games, and lost both of them.

In the BC game, Michigan hung in there with BC, and only trailed by one point at halftime. The Wolverines were still within two points, 54-52, with 8:28 left in the game, when BC went on a sudden 12-0 run, and that was the game. It all started with an ugly 5-point possession for BC: they made a layup, got fouled on the UM inbounds play, made one free throw, missed the 2nd, but got the offensive rebound for another layup. That was all it took to rattle Michigan, and BC took advantage of it. Just to make things worse, the game was on national TV, since it was part of the ill-fated ACC/Big Ten Challenge, which the ACC won again, 8-3. Michigan is usually one of the few bright spots in the Challenge, as one of only two Big Ten teams with a non-losing record (3-3, going into this game), but they have a losing record now.

The Harvard game was even worse. In fact, I think it was the most embarrassing UM basketball loss since 1981, when Eastern Michigan beat UM in Crisler Arena. Harvard is not a very good team. They were picked to finish 6th in the Ivy League, behind Brown, who Michigan beat by 15 points in Crisler Arena earlier this season. This is the same Harvard team that lost their opener at Stanford, 111-56. The same Harvard that is coached by former UM coach Tommy Amaker. Michigan had to win this game, and they failed miserably. They traded baskets early in the game, then they let Harvard creep ahead. The deficit grew to 11 points just before halftime, but Michigan battled back, and actually led by as many as 3 points late in the 2nd half. The score was tied up 51-51 with 3:37 left in the game, when Harvard went on an 11-0 run to end the game. Michigan didn't score a single point in the last 3:37 of the game. Disgusting.

Game Statistics

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

Team	Field goals	3-Pointers	Free throws
Michigan	23-61 (37.7%)	9-25 (36.0%)	9-17 (52.9%)
Boston College	28-62 (45.2%)	8-14 (57.1%)	13-22 (59.1%)
Advantage	Boston College	Boston College	Boston College

Boston College dominated these stats, which is why they won the game by 13 points. Michigan's percentages are pretty weak, especially free throw shooting.

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

Team	Rebounds	Assists	Turnovers	Blocks	Steals

Michigan	32	13	8	9	8
Boston College	50	16	13	6	2
Advantage	BC	BC	BC	Michigan	Michigan

Sure, Michigan had more blocks and steals, but the 18 extra rebounds more than make up for it. I can't remember the last time Michigan was outrebounded by 18.

On to the Harvard game, and the shooting statistics:

Team	Field goals	3-Pointers	Free throws
Michigan	20-62 (32.3%)	5-20 (25.0%)	6-7 (85.7%)
Harvard	24-59 (40.7%)	5-18 (27.8%)	9-12 (75.0%)
Advantage	Harvard	Harvard	Michigan

The important stat here is overall shooting percentage. Harvard shot better, and that's why they won.

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

Team	Rebounds	Assists	Turnovers	Blocks	Steals
Michigan	39	6	13	9	5
Harvard	41	17	9	5	7
Advantage	Harvard	Harvard	Harvard	Michigan	Harvard

It's hard to believe that Michigan was out-rebounded by Harvard.

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. If they don't shoot 20, and make 40%, they lose. 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
11/28/2007 (Wed)	Boston College	9-25 (36.0%)	Yes
12/01/2007 (Wed)	At Harvard	5-20 (25.0%)	Yes
Totals		54-151 (35.7%)	5-1

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

Coach Beilein went with his regular starting lineup. Here's how they did:

Player	Field Goals		3-Pointers		Free Throws		Points	
	BC	Harv	BC	Harv	BC	Harv	BC	Harv
Ron Coleman	2-10	5-9	1-5	2-4	1-2	0-0	6	12
Zack Gibson	2-6	2-3	0-2	0-0	0-0	0-0	4	4
Kelvin Grady	3-5	1-3	2-3	1-3	0-0	0-0	8	3
Manny Harris	7-17	5-17	2-6	0-2	3-6	3-3	19	13
DeShawn Sims	5-12	4-17	2-4	1-5	4-5	3-4	16	12
Totals	19-50 38.0%	17-49 34.7%	7-20 35.0%	4-14 28.6%	8-13 61.5%	6-7 85.7%	53	44

As a group, the starters didn't do very well. Their percentages are weak, except for free throw shooting in the Harvard game.

Individually, Harris and Sims played pretty well. They both hit double figures in both games, and shot a decent percentage. Harris was Michigan's leading scorer in both games.

Coleman was the only other starter to hit double figures in a game. The rest of the starters didn't do much.

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

Player	Field Goals		3-Pointers		Free Throws		Points	
	BC	Harv	BC	Harv	BC	Harv	BC	Harv
C.J. Lee	2-3	0-2	2-3	0-1	0-0	0-0	6	0
K'Len Morris	0-3	0-1	0-1	0-1	0-0	0-0	0	0
Jevohn Shepherd	0-0	DNP	0-0	DNP	0-2	DNP	0	DNP
Jerret Smith	0-0	1-2	0-0	1-1	0-0	0-0	0	3
Ekpe Udoh	2-4	1-3	0-0	0-0	1-2	0-0	5	2
Anthony Wright	0-1	1-5	0-1	0-3	0-0	0-0	0	2
Totals	4-11 36.4%	3-13 23.1%	2-5 40.0%	1-6 16.7%	1-4 25.0%	0-0 0.00%	11	7

As a group, the bench players didn't contribute much. Their shooting percentages are lousy, and they didn't chip in many points.

Individually, no one stood out, although Udoh probably contributed the most. Lee had a decent game against BC, but didn't do much against Harvard.

The Big Picture

After the first 2 games, things looked pretty promising, but since then, things have looked pretty gloomy. Since they were 2-0, Michigan has won just one game, and lost five. Of those five losses, only of them was a game that they were expected to lose (Georgetown), and one of them was a game that they should have won (Harvard). The rest were "toss up" games. At this rate, Michigan will be hard-pressed to win 10 games this season. In my preseason article, I predicted that Michigan would finish 16-14, but after seeing how they played against Harvard, I have to adjust that prediction down to 10-20.

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

Date	Opponent	Site	Result	Score	Record
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	L	77-64	3-4
12/01/2007 (Sat)	Harvard	Boston, Mass.	L	62-51	3-5
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 only has one game this week, but it's a very tough one: on Saturday (12/07/2007, 2:00 p.m.), they play at (#7) Duke. Duke has the nation's longest home non-conference winning streak, at 55 games. The last time Michigan won in Cameron Indoor Stadium was way back in 1996. The game will be on national TV (CBS), so tune by to see how the Wolverines do, and check back here next week to see what happened, and why.

Go Blue!