01/21/2008 – Week #13 – The Losses Continue To Pile Up

The Week In Review

The University of Michigan men's basketball team played two games last week, and they lost both of them. On Wednesday (01/16/2008), they lost at Illinois, 75-57, then on Saturday (01/19/2008), they lost to Iowa in Crisler Arena, 68-60. The two losses lower Michigan's record to 5-13, 1-5 in the Big Ten. Sadly, UM is now 3-6 at home, and they haven't won in Crisler Arena since they beat Oakland on 12/12/2007.

The saddest part about both games last week is that Michigan could have won both of them. Illinois and Iowa are both lower-division teams this season, and these were both "toss up" games. In both games, Michigan had the game close (down 63-60 in the last minute vs. Iowa) or tied (43-all with 12:35 to go vs. Illinois) in the 2nd half, but couldn't get the win. In both games, UM had at least one long scoring drought that either put the game out of reach (Illinois), or put them in a deep hole that cost them at the end (Iowa). That has been Michigan's biggest problem this season: the long scoring droughts that put the game out of reach.

Game Statistics

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

Team	Field goals	3-Pointers	Free throws
Michigan	20-56 (35.7%)	8-27 (29.6%)	9-17 (52.9%)
Illinois	27-51 (52.9%)	6-14 (42.9%)	15-24 (62.5%)
Advantage	Illinois	Illinois	Illinois

Illinois dominated these stats, and that's why they won the game. Michigan shot pretty poorly, and Illinois shot pretty well, except for free throws, where both teams were lousy.

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

Team	Rebounds	Assists	Turnovers	Blocks	Steals
Michigan	30	9	8	3	4
Illinois	39	19	10	1	4
Advantage	Illinois	Illinois	Michigan	Michigan	Even

The big stat here is Rebounds, again. Illinois owned the boards. Combined with their better shooting, that was all they needed to win handily.

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

Team	Field goals	3-Pointers	Free throws
Michigan	22-54 (40.7%)	11-28 (39.3%)	5-8 (62.5%)
Iowa	23-47 (48.9%)	7-19 (36.8%)	15-24 (62.5%)
Advantage	Iowa	Michigan	Even

These stats are very deceiving: overall shooting and 3-point shooting pretty much balanced each other out, and both teams shot the same percentage from the free-throw line, but that's where Iowa won the game, since they made almost twice as many free throws as Michigan attempted.

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

Team	Rebounds	Assists	Turnovers	Blocks	Steals
Michigan	25	13	12	5	7
Iowa	37	15	14	2	2
Advantage	Iowa	Iowa	Michigan	Michigan	Michigan

Once again, these stats are deceiving: Michigan won 3 out of the 5 categories, and it was very close for Assists. However, Iowa crushed Michigan on the boards, and that made all the difference.

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	Result	Fits Theory?
11/09/2007	Radford	7-23 (30.4%)	W	N/A
11/11/2007	Brown	12-24 (50.0%)	W	Yes
11/15/2007	At Georgetown	5-18 (27.8%)	L	Yes
11/21/2007	Butler (neutral site)	8-20 (40.0%)	L	No
11/23/2007	Eastern Washington (neutral site)	10-27 (37.0%)	W	N/A
11/24/2007	Western Kentucky (neutral site)	5-17 (29.4%)	L	Yes
11/28/2007	Boston College	9-25 (36.0%)	L	Yes
12/01/2007	At Harvard	5-20 (25.0%)	L	Yes
12/08/2007	At Duke	6-19 (31.6%)	L	Yes
12/12/2007	Oakland	7-17 (41.2%)	W	N/A
12/15/2007	Central Michigan	4-8 (50.0%)	L	Yes
12/22/2007	UCLA	6-31 (19.4%)	L	Yes
01/02/2008	Wisconsin	5-18 (27.8%)	L	Yes
01/05/2008	At Purdue	4-18 (22.2%)	L	Yes
01/08/2008	Indiana	8-28 (28.6%)	L	Yes
01/12/2008	At Northwestern	8-26 (30.8%)	W	N/A
01/16/2008	At Illinois	8-27 (29.6%)	L	Yes
01/19/2008	Iowa	11-28 (39.3%)	L	Yes
Totals		128-394 (32.5%)		13-1

It's been a long time (12/15 vs. CMU) since UM shot 40% from 3-point range. Actually, they've only shot 40% in four games so far. Ouch.

Individual Statistics

Between defections (K'Len Morris and Jerret Smith), injuries (Ron Coleman), and performance (C.J. Lee for Kelvin Grady and Ekpe Udoh for Zack Gibson), Coach Beilein has had to juggle his starting lineup a lot this season. A little stability would sure help.

Here's how the starters did this week:

	Field Goals		3-Pointers		Free Throws		Points	
Player	Ill	Iowa	Ill	Iowa	Ill	Iowa	Ill	Iowa

Manny Harris	2-7	4-12	0-3	1-3	1-2	2-2	5	11
C.J. Lee	0-2	1-2	0-2	0-1	0-0	0-0	0	2
Jevohn Shepherd	2-4	5-7	0-1	1-2	1-2	0-0	5	11
DeShawn Sims	6-15	6-15	1-5	5-10	0-1	1-2	13	18
Ekpe Udoh	0-5	1-3	0-2	0-0	6-10	1-2	6	3
Totals	10-33 30.3%	17-39 43.6%	1-13 7.7%	7-16 43.8%	8-15 53.3%	4-6 66.7%	29	45

As a group, the starters did terrible. Their percentages are lousy, except for overall shooting vs. Iowa, and they didn't score nearly enough points, especially in the Illinois game.

Individually, only Sims scored in double figures in both games. Harris hurt his foot in the Illinois game, and that helped hold him under 10 points for only the 2nd time this season. He and Shepherd did pretty well in the Iowa game. Lee and Udoh didn't contribute much offensively, although Udoh did chip in 6 rebounds vs. Illinois, and 2 blocks in each game.

As far as the bench players go, Coach Beilein played 5 of them in each game, but Coleman only played 8 minutes in the Illinois game, and 3 minutes against Iowa.

Here's how the bench players did:

	Field Goals		3-Pointers		Free Throws		Points	
Player	Ill	Iowa	Ill	Iowa	Ill	Iowa	Ill	Iowa
Ron Coleman	0-3	0-0	0-1	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0
Zack Gibson	2-3	3-7	0-1	2-5	1-2	0-0	5	8
Kelvin Grady	1-5	2-4	0-2	2-4	0-0	0-0	2	6
David Merritt	2-4	0-0	2-2	0-0	0-0	1-2	6	1
Anthony Wright	5-8	0-4	5-8	0-3	0-0	0-0	15	0
Totals	10-23 43.5%	5-15 33.3%	7-14 50.0%	4-12 33.3%	1-2 50.0%	1-2 50.0%	28	15

As a group, the bench players contributed a little more than usual. Their shooting percentages are just OK, but they did chip in a few points, especially in the Illinois game.

Individually, only Wright hit double figures, against Illinois. In fact, he had a career-high in points, and he led the team in scoring.

The other big news this week was David Merritt, again. After hitting two 3-pointers last week against Northwestern, he hit two more again this week, both in the Illinois game.

The rest of the bench players didn't contribute much.

Big Ten This Week

Here are the current Big Ten standings, after Week #3 of league play:

	Big Ten			Overall		
Team	Wins	Losses	Percent	Wins	Losses	Percent
Indiana	5	0	1.000	16	1	0.941
Wisconsin	5	0	1.000	15	2	0.882
Michigan State	4	1	0.800	16	2	0.889
Purdue	4	1	0.800	13	5	0.722

Ohio State	3	2	0.600	12	6	0.667
Minnesota	2	3	0.400	12	5	0.706
Penn State	2	3	0.400	10	7	0.588
Iowa	2	4	0.333	9	10	0.474
Illinois	1	5	0.167	9	10	0.474
Michigan	1	5	0.167	5	13	0.278
Northwestern	0	5	0.000	6	9	0.400

Here are the results from last week's games:

Tuesday (01/15/2008)
Ohio State lost at Michigan State, 66-60
Wisconsin won at Penn State, 80-55

Wednesday (01/16/2008)
Michigan lost at Illinois, 75-57
Purdue won at Iowa, 67-62
Northwestern won at Chicago State, 65-47 (non-conference)

Thursday (01/17/2008)
Indiana won at Minnesota, 65-60

Saturday (01/19/2008)
Iowa won at Michigan, 68-60
Illinois lost at Purdue, 74-67
Northwestern lost at Wisconsin, 62-50
Ohio State lost at Tennessee, 74-69 (non-conference)

Sunday (01/20/2008)
Penn State lost at Indiana, 81-65
Michigan State won at Minnesota, 78-73

The home teams didn't do very well this week, going 5-5 in league games. There were no real surprises this week. A couple of the pretenders (Minnesota and Penn State) finally played against the contenders, and got spanked.

Here are the games scheduled for the upcoming week (Week #4):

Tuesday (01/22/2008)
Michigan at Wisconsin
Illinois at Ohio State

Wednesday (01/23/2008)
Purdue at Penn State
Iowa at Indiana

Thursday (01/24/2008)
Michigan State at Northwestern

Saturday (01/26/2008)
Wisconsin at Purdue
Penn State at Iowa

Minnesota at Ohio State
Connecticut at Indiana (non-conference)

Sunday (01/27/2008)
Michigan at Michigan State

There are only a couple big games this week:

- Michigan at Wisconsin on Tuesday. UM doesn't stand a chance in this one. Wisconsin is practically unbeatable at home, and Michigan is running on fumes.
- Wisconsin at Purdue on Saturday. Here's another big game for a contender: is Purdue a contender or a pretender? We'll find out in this game.
- Michigan at Michigan State on Sunday. Another big blowout loss for the Wolverines. MSU is also practically unbeatable at home.

Here's the entire Big Ten schedule and results, with the teams in alphabetical order:

Team	Record	Wins	Losses	Remaining Games
Illinois	1-5	Michigan (H)	Ohio State (H) Penn State (H) Wisconsin (A) Indiana (A) Purdue (A)	Ohio State (A) Northwestern (H) Michigan State (A) Purdue (H) Indiana (H) Minnesota (A) Penn State (A) Wisconsin (H) Michigan (A) Iowa (A) Michigan State (H) Minnesota (H)
Indiana	5-0	Iowa (A) Michigan (A) Illinois (H) Minnesota (A) Penn State (H)		Iowa (H) Wisconsin (A) Northwestern (H) Illinois (A) Ohio State (A) Wisconsin (H) Michigan State (H) Purdue (H) Northwestern (A) Ohio State (H) Michigan State (A) Minnesota (H) Penn State (A)
Iowa	2-4	Michigan State (H) Michigan (A)	Indiana (H) Wisconsin (A) Ohio State (A) Purdue (H)	Indiana (A) Penn State (H) Purdue (A) Ohio State (H) Wisconsin (H) Minnesota (A) Michigan (H) Northwestern (H) Michigan State (A) Penn State (A) Illinois (H)

				Northwestern (A)
Michigan	1-5	Northwestern (A)	Wisconsin (H) Purdue (A) Indiana (H) Illinois (A) Iowa (H)	Wisconsin (A) Michigan State (A) Minnesota (H) Ohio State (A) Penn State (H) Iowa (A) Ohio State (H) Minnesota (A) Illinois (H) Northwestern (H) Penn State (A) Purdue (H)
Michigan State	4-1	Minnesota (H) Purdue (H) Ohio State (H) Minnesota (A)	Iowa (A)	Northwestern (A) Michigan (H) Illinois (H) Penn State (A) Northwestern (H) Purdue (A) Indiana (A) Penn State (H) Iowa (H) Wisconsin (A) Indiana (H) Illinois (A) Ohio State (A)
Minnesota	2-3	Northwestern (H) Penn State (A)	Michigan State (A) Indiana (H) Michigan State (H)	Ohio State (A) Michigan (A) Wisconsin (H) Northwestern (A) Iowa (H) Illinois (H) Wisconsin (A) Michigan (H) Penn State (H) Purdue (A) Ohio State (H) Indiana (A) Illinois (A)
Northwestern	0-5		Penn State (H) Ohio State (A) Minnesota (A) Michigan (H) Wisconsin (A)	Michigan State (H) Illinois (A) Indiana (A) Minnesota (H) Michigan State (A) Ohio State (H) Purdue (H) Iowa (A) Indiana (H) Michigan (A) Purdue (A) Iowa (H) Wisconsin (H)
Ohio State	3-2	Illinois (A)	Purdue (A)	Illinois (H)

		Northwestern (H) Iowa (H)	Michigan State (A)	Minnesota (H) Penn State (A) Iowa (A) Michigan (H) Indiana (H) Northwestern (A) Michigan (A) Wisconsin (H) Indiana (A) Minnesota (A) Purdue (H) Michigan State (H)
Penn State	2-3	Northwestern (A) Illinois (A)	Minnesota (H) Wisconsin (H) Indiana (A)	Purdue (H) Iowa (A) Ohio State (H) Michigan State (H) Purdue (A) Michigan (A) Illinois (H) Michigan State (A) Minnesota (A) Iowa (H) Michigan (H) Wisconsin (A) Indiana (H)
Purdue	4-1	Michigan (H) Ohio State (H) Iowa (A) Illinois (H)	Michigan State (A)	Penn State (A) Wisconsin (H) Iowa (H) Illinois (A) Penn State (H) Wisconsin (A) Michigan State (H) Northwestern (A) Indiana (A) Minnesota (H) Northwestern (H) Ohio State (A) Michigan (A)
Wisconsin	5-0	Michigan (A) Iowa (H) Illinois (H) Penn State (A) Northwestern (H)		Michigan (H) Purdue (A) Indiana (H) Minnesota (A) Iowa (A) Purdue (H) Indiana (A) Minnesota (H) Illinois (A) Ohio State (A) Michigan State (H) Penn State (H) Northwestern (A)

The Big Picture

Let's face it: this season is completely down the drain. Michigan might surprise someone somewhere along the line, but it sure doesn't seem very likely. Realistically, they might be able to beat Penn State and Northwestern in Crisler Arena, and maybe beat one of the lower-division teams on the road, but that's about it. Figure 2 or 3 more wins, and several blowout losses.

That's the bad news. The good news is: Michigan has a lot of good young players, and they're getting lots of playing time and experience. The Beilein Experiment isn't going as well as we would have hoped so far, but everyone seems willing to give it some more time. It's just painful to watch while it's a work in progress.

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	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.	L	95-67	3-6
12/12/2007 (Wed)	Oakland	Ann Arbor	W	103-87	4-6
12/15/2007 (Sat)	Central Michigan	Ann Arbor	L	78-67	4-7
12/22/2007 (Sat)	UCLA	Ann Arbor	L	69-54	4-8
01/02/2008 (Wed)	Wisconsin	Ann Arbor	L	70-54	4-9 (0-1)
01/05/2008 (Sat)	Purdue	West Lafayette, Ind.	L	65-58	4-10 (0-2)
01/08/2008 (Tue)	Indiana	Ann Arbor	L	78-64	4-11 (0-3)
01/12/2008 (Sat)	Northwestern	Evanston, Ill.	W	78-68	5-11 (1-3)
01/16/2008 (Wed)	Illinois	Champaign, Ill.	L	75-57	5-12 (1-4)
01/19/2008 (Sat)	Iowa	Ann Arbor	L	68-60	5-13 (1-5)
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.			

Date	Opponent	Site	Result	Score	Record
03/16/2008 (Sun)	Championship	Indianapolis, Ind.			

The Upcoming Week

As you can see in the schedule above, Michigan has two games this week, both on the road, and both in arenas that are among the hardest in the Big Ten to win at. On Tuesday (01/22/2008, 7:00 p.m. EST), they play at Wisconsin, then on Sunday (01/27/2008, 12:00 p.m.), they play at Michigan State. The Wisconsin game is on ESPN, and the MSU game is on CBS. Tune in to watch the carnage, then check back here next week to see what happened, and why.

Go Blue!