01/28/2008 – Week #14 – Two More Tough Big Ten Road Losses

The Week In Review

The University of Michigan men's basketball team played two games last week, and they lost both of them. On Tuesday (01/22/2008), they lost at (#11) Wisconsin, 64-61, then on Sunday (01/27/2008), they lost at (#10) Michigan State, 77-62. The two losses lower Michigan's record to 5-15, 1-7 in the Big Ten.

Once again, Michigan had a decent chance to win both games, and they didn't capitalize on the opportunity. In the Wisconsin game, Michigan was down one point (59-58) with 1:21 to play, but they couldn't get the big defensive stop they needed to win the game. In the MSU game, Michigan actually led by 5 (19-14) in the 1st half, before they let the game get away from them a little. Still they were within 10 points (49-39) with about 12 minutes left in the game, then they slowly let the game slip away.

On the one hand, the final result was two more losses, but it was encouraging to see UM hang with the big boys, on the road, in two of the toughest arenas in the country.

Game Statistics

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

Team	Field goals	3-Pointers	Free throws
Michigan	26-62 (41.9%)	7-21 (33.3%)	2-4 (50.0%)
Wisconsin	26-50 (52.0%)	6-16 (37.5%)	6-9 (66.7%)
Advantage	Wisconsin	Wisconsin	Wisconsin

It was a close game, but you wouldn't know it if you just looked at the percentages. Wisconsin dominated there, but look again. Michigan and Wisconsin both made 26 field goals, and Michigan actually hit one more 3-pointer. The difference was free-throw shooting: Wisconsin made 6 free throws, and UM only made 2. That's how close the game was.

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

Team	Rebounds	Assists	Turnovers	Blocks	Steals
Michigan	35	7	12	5	6
Wisconsin	24	11	11	3	8
Advantage	Michigan	Wisconsin	Wisconsin	Michigan	Wisconsin

How did Wisconsin win this game? All the stats are very close, except for Rebounds, where Michigan pounded Wisconsin, including 20 offensive rebounds. It all comes back to free-throw shooting, and getting to the line.

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

Team	Field goals	3-Pointers	Free throws
Michigan	23-65 (35.4%)	8-31 (25.8%)	8-15 (53.3%)
Michigan State	31-53 (58.5%)	6-18 (33.3%)	9-16 (56.3%)
Advantage	Michigan State	Michigan State	Michigan State

It's easy to see why State won handily: overall shooting percentage. MSU shot well, and UM didn't, and that was the game.

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

Team	Rebounds	Assists	Turnovers	Blocks	Steals
Michigan	35	13	10	3	4
Michigan State	36	25	16	3	7
Advantage	MSU	MSU	Michigan	Even	MSU

These stats are too close to matter. The big stat was overall shooting percentage.

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
01/22008	At Wisconsin	7-21 (33.3%)	L	Yes
01/27008	At Michigan State	8-31 (25.8%)	L	Yes
Totals		143-446 (32.1%)		15-1

At least Michigan shot more than 20 3-pointers in the last 6 games, even though they have only gotten close to 40% once, vs. Iowa.

Individual Statistics

Coach Beilein went with his latest starting lineup again. Here's how they did this week:

Player	Field Goals		3-Pointers		Free Throws		Points	
	Wisc	MSU	Wisc	MSU	Wisc	MSU	Wisc	MSU
Manny Harris	11-19	4-14	2-7	1-5	2-3	2-2	26	11

C.J. Lee	0-2	0-3	0-1	0-2	0-0	0-0	0	0
Jevohn Shepherd	2-4	4-9	1-2	0-3	0-1	1-1	5	9
DeShawn Sims	4-19	1-7	2-7	0-3	0-0	4-8	10	6
Ekpe Udoh	5-10	2-5	0-0	1-1	0-0	1-2	10	6
Totals	22-54 40.7%	11-38 28.9%	5-17 29.4%	2-14 14.3%	2-4 50.0%	8-13 61.5%	51	32

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

Individually, only Harris scored in double figures in both games. Sims and Udoh hit double figures in the Wisconsin game, but they didn't do much vs. MSU. Shepherd did OK, but Lee didn't contribute much.

As far as the bench players go, Coach Beilein was short one in the Wisconsin game: Ron Coleman missed the 2nd game of his career, although he did play 16 minutes in the MSU game.

Here's how the bench players did:

Player	Field Goals		3-Pointers		Free Throws		Points	
	Wisc	MSU	Wisc	MSU	Wisc	MSU	Wisc	MSU
Ron Coleman	DNP	1-2	DNP	1-2	DNP	0-0	DNP	3
Zack Gibson	2-2	4-8	0-0	0-2	0-0	0-0	4	8
Kelvin Grady	1-1	2-4	1-1	1-2	0-0	0-0	3	5
David Merritt	1-2	1-3	1-1	1-3	0-0	0-0	3	3
Anthony Wright	0-3	4-10	0-2	3-8	0-0	0-2	0	11
Totals	4-8 50.0%	12-27 44.4%	2-4 50.0%	6-17 35.3%	0-0 0.0%	0-2 0.0%	10	30

As a group, the bench players didn't contribute much in the Wisconsin game, although they did pitch in a little more than usual against MSU. Their shooting percentages are just OK, and they did chip in a few points in the MSU game.

Individually, only Wright hit double figures, against MSU. The rest of the bench players didn't contribute much.

Big Ten This Week

Here are the current Big Ten standings, after Week #4 of league play:

Team	Big Ten			Overall		
	Wins	Losses	Percent	Wins	Losses	Percent
Indiana	6	0	1.000	17	2	0.895
Michigan State	6	1	0.857	18	2	0.900
Wisconsin	6	1	0.857	16	3	0.842
Purdue	6	1	0.857	15	5	0.750
Ohio State	5	2	0.714	14	6	0.700
Iowa	3	5	0.375	10	11	0.476
Minnesota	2	4	0.333	12	6	0.667
Penn State	2	5	0.286	10	9	0.526
Illinois	1	6	0.143	9	11	0.450

Michigan	1	7	0.125	5	15	0.250
Northwestern	0	6	0.000	6	10	0.375

Here are the results from last week's games:

Tuesday (01/22/2008)
Michigan lost at Wisconsin, 64-61
Illinois lost at Ohio State, 64-58

Wednesday (01/23/2008)
Purdue won at Penn State, 64-42
Iowa lost at Indiana, 65-43

Thursday (01/24/2008)
Michigan State won at Northwestern, 78-62

Saturday (01/26/2008)
Wisconsin lost at Purdue, 60-56
Penn State lost at Iowa, 64-49
Minnesota lost at Ohio State, 76-60
Connecticut won at Indiana, 68-63 (non-conference)

Sunday (01/27/2008)
Michigan lost at Michigan State, 77-62

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 #5):

Tuesday (01/29/2008)
Ohio State at Penn State

Wednesday (01/30/2008)
Iowa at Purdue
Illinois at Michigan State
UTPA at Northwestern (non-conference)

Thursday (01/31/2008)
Minnesota at Michigan
Indiana at Wisconsin

Saturday (02/02/2008)
Purdue at Illinois
Ohio State at Iowa
Michigan State at Penn State

Sunday (02/03/2008)
Northwestern at Indiana
Wisconsin at Minnesota

There are only 2 big games this week:

- Minnesota at Michigan on Thursday. Another "toss up" game for Michigan. They need to start winning these.
- Indiana at Wisconsin on Thursday. Finally! The first matchup between the contenders.

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

Team	Record	Wins	Losses	Remaining Games
Illinois	1-6	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	6-0	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	3-5	Michigan State (H) Michigan (A) Penn State (H)	Indiana (H) Wisconsin (A) Ohio State (A) Purdue (H) Indiana (A)	Purdue (A) Ohio State (H) Wisconsin (H) Minnesota (A) Michigan (H) Northwestern (H) Michigan State (A) Penn State (A) Illinois (H) Northwestern (A)
Michigan	1-7	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	6-1	Minnesota (H) Purdue (H) Ohio State (H)	Iowa (A)	Illinois (H) Penn State (A) Northwestern (H)

		Minnesota (A) Northwestern (A) Michigan (H)		Purdue (A) Indiana (A) Penn State (H) Iowa (H) Wisconsin (A) Indiana (H) Illinois (A) Ohio State (A)
Minnesota	2-4	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	0-6		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	5-2	Illinois (A) Northwestern (H) Iowa (H) Illinois (H) Minnesota (H)	Purdue (A) Michigan State (A)	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	2-5	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	6-1	Michigan (H) Ohio State (H) Iowa (A) Illinois (H) Penn State (A) Wisconsin (H)	Michigan State (A)	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	6-1	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

The schedule for Michigan is going to get a little easier in the next few weeks. They certainly played their toughest 2-game stretch, when they played at Wisconsin and at Michigan State last week. Their next 9 games are against Minnesota (home and away), Ohio State (home and away), Penn State (home and away), Iowa (away), Illinois (home), and Northwestern (home). Of those 6 teams, only Ohio State has a winning record in the Big Ten, and 5 of the 9 games are at home, so maybe Michigan can finally win a couple more games.

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)

Date	Opponent	Site	Result	Score	Record
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.	L	64-61	5-14 (1-6)
01/27/2008 (Sun)	Michigan State	East Lansing, Mich.	L	77-62	5-15 (1-7)
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, at home. On Thursday (01/31/2008, 7:00 p.m.), they play Minnesota, in Crisler Arena. Minnesota is better this season than most people expected, but they're still beatable. This is another of those "toss up" games that Michigan has to start winning. Come on down to Crisler and cheer on the Wolverines, then check back here next week to see what happened, and why.

Go Blue!