02/04/2008 – Week #15 – Another Disappointing Loss In A Lost Season

The Week In Review

The University of Michigan men's basketball team only played one game last week, and they lost it. On Thursday (01/31/2008), they lost to Minnesota in Crisler Arena, 77-65. The loss lowers Michigan's record to 5-16, 1-8 in the Big Ten.

This was a game that Michigan could have won, but they came out flat, and fell behind early. They had a few half-hearted runs that made it look like they might get back into the game, but Minnesota answered every challenge, and won easily. It was a very discouraging game, because it was one of the few that Michigan stood a chance of winning in this lost season.

Game Statistics

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

Team	Field goals	3-Pointers	Free throws
Michigan	21-58 (36.2%)	6-25 (24.0%)	17-24 (70.8%)
Minnesota	31-53 (58.5%)	4-11 (36.4%)	11-19 (57.9%)
Advantage	Minnesota	Minnesota	Michigan

This one is easy to analyze: Minnesota made 10 more baskets on 5 less shots. They shot more than 20% better. Michigan shot terribly, especially from 3-point range. What more do you need to know?

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

Team	Rebounds	Assists	Turnovers	Blocks	Steals
Michigan	33	9	17	6	7
Minnesota	35	16	17	4	12
Advantage	Minnesota	Minnesota	Even	Michigan	Minnesota

These stats are too close to matter. It was all shooting percentage this game, although the 12 steals by Minnesota sure helped them.

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

Date	Opponent	3-Point Shooting	Result	Fits Theory?
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
01/22/2008	At Wisconsin	7-21 (33.3%)	L	Yes
01/27/2008	At Michigan State	8-31 (25.8%)	L	Yes
01/31/2008	Minnesota	6-25 (24.0%)	L	Yes
Totals		149-471 (31.6%)		16-1

Michigan didn't even get close to 40%, and they got blown out. This was the 3rd worst 3-point shooting percentage of the year, ahead of only the Purdue and UCLA games.

Individual Statistics

Coach Beilein changed his starting lineup again: he went back to Kelvin Grady in place of C.J. Lee. It didn't appear to make much difference.

Here's how the starters did this week:

Player	Field Goals	3-Pointers	Free Throws	Points
Kelvin Grady	1-4	0-3	0-0	2
Manny Harris	6-14	2-4	5-5	19
Jevohn Shepherd	1-4	0-1	3-4	5
DeShawn Sims	3-10	0-4	2-4	8
Ekpe Udoh	1-5	0-1	1-2	3
Totals	12-37 32.4%	2-13 15.4%	11-15 73.3%	37

As a group, the starters did a lousy job in the Minnesota game. Their percentages are lousy, especially 3-point shooting, and they didn't score nearly enough points. 37 points is an embarrassment.

Individually, only Harris scored in double figures. He continues to be one of the few bright spots in a dreary season. Sims is in a wicked slump, and he didn't do anything to break out of it vs. Minnesota. The other starters were worthless out there.

As far as the bench players go, Coach Beilein went 5-deep again. Here's how the bench players did:

Player	Field Goals	3-Pointers	Free Throws	Points
Ron Coleman	5-9	2-4	2-3	14
Zack Gibson	2-4	1-3	2-4	7
C.J. Lee	1-3	0-1	0-0	2
David Merritt	0-1	0-0	0-0	0
Anthony Wright	1-4	1-4	2-2	5

Totals	9-21 42.9%	4-12 33.3%	6-9 66.7%	28

As a group, the bench players did better than the starters. Their shooting percentages were better, and they chipped in a decent number of points.

Individually, only Coleman hit double figures. Gibson and Wright did OK, but Lee and Merritt didn't contribute much.

Big Ten This Week

Here are the current Big Ten standings, after Week #5 of league play:

Team	Big Ten			Overall		
	Wins	Losses	Percent	Wins	Losses	Percent
Wisconsin	8	1	0.889	18	3	0.857
Purdue	8	1	0.889	17	5	0.773
Indiana	7	1	0.875	18	3	0.857
Michigan State	7	2	0.778	19	3	0.864
Ohio State	6	3	0.667	15	7	0.682
Iowa	4	6	0.400	11	12	0.478
Minnesota	3	5	0.375	13	7	0.650
Penn State	3	6	0.333	11	10	0.524
Illinois	2	8	0.200	10	13	0.435
Michigan	1	8	0.111	5	16	0.238
Northwestern	0	8	0.000	7	12	0.368

Here are the results from last week's games:

Tuesday (01/29/2008)
Ohio State won at Penn State, 68-56

Wednesday (01/30/2008)
Iowa lost at Purdue, 51-50
Illinois lost at Michigan State, 51-41
UTPA lost at Northwestern, 68-59 (non-conference)

Thursday (01/31/2008)
Minnesota won at Michigan, 77-65
Indiana lost at Wisconsin, 62-49

Saturday (02/02/2008)
Purdue won at Illinois, 83-75
Ohio State lost at Iowa, 53-48
Michigan State lost at Penn State, 85-76

Sunday (02/03/2008)
Northwestern lost at Indiana, 75-63
Wisconsin won at Minnesota, 63-47

The home teams didn't do very well this week, going 6-4 in league games. There were a couple surprises this week:

- Indiana getting beaten soundly at Wisconsin on Thursday. It wasn't too surprising that Wisconsin won in their snake pit, but it was a bit of a surprise that they won by 13 points.
- Michigan State losing at Penn State on Saturday. This is one of the bigger upsets in the last few years.

Here are the games scheduled for the upcoming week (Week #6):

Tuesday (02/05/2008)
Michigan at Ohio State
Penn State at Purdue

Wednesday (02/06/2008)
Minnesota at Northwestern
Wisconsin at Iowa

Thursday (02/07/2008)
Indiana at Illinois

Saturday (02/09/2008)
Penn State at Michigan
Iowa at Minnesota
Northwestern at Michigan State
Purdue at Wisconsin

Sunday (02/10/2008)
Indiana at Ohio State

There is only one big game this week: Purdue at Wisconsin on Saturday. These two teams are currently tied for 1st place. I can't call the Michigan games "big" any more.

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

Team	Record	Wins	Losses	Remaining Games
Illinois	2-8	Michigan (H) Northwestern (H)	Ohio State (H) Penn State (H) Wisconsin (A) Indiana (A) Purdue (A) Ohio State (A) Michigan State (A) Purdue (H)	Indiana (H) Minnesota (A) Penn State (A) Wisconsin (H) Michigan (A) Iowa (A) Michigan State (H) Minnesota (H)
Indiana	7-1	Iowa (A) Michigan (A) Illinois (H) Minnesota (A) Penn State (H) Iowa (H) Northwestern (H)	Wisconsin (A)	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	4-6	Michigan State (H)	Indiana (H)	Wisconsin (H)

		Michigan (A) Penn State (H) Ohio State (H)	Wisconsin (A) Ohio State (A) Purdue (H) Indiana (A) Purdue (A)	Minnesota (A) Michigan (H) Northwestern (H) Michigan State (A) Penn State (A) Illinois (H) Northwestern (A)
Michigan	1-8	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	7-2	Minnesota (H) Purdue (H) Ohio State (H) Minnesota (A) Northwestern (A) Michigan (H) Illinois (H)	Iowa (A) Penn State (A)	Northwestern (H) Purdue (A) Indiana (A) Penn State (H) Iowa (H) Wisconsin (A) Indiana (H) Illinois (A) Ohio State (A)
Minnesota	3-5	Northwestern (H) Penn State (A) Michigan (A)	Michigan State (A) Indiana (H) Michigan State (H) Ohio State (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	0-8		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	6-3	Illinois (A) Northwestern (H) Iowa (H) Illinois (H) Minnesota (H) Penn State (A)	Purdue (A) Michigan 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	3-6	Northwestern (A) Illinois (A) Michigan State (H)	Minnesota (H) Wisconsin (H) Indiana (A) Purdue (H) Iowa (A) Ohio State (H)	Purdue (A) Michigan (A) Illinois (H) Michigan State (A) Minnesota (A) Iowa (H) Michigan (H) Wisconsin (A) Indiana (H)
Purdue	8-1	Michigan (H) Ohio State (H) Iowa (A) Illinois (H) Penn State (A) Wisconsin (H) Iowa (H) Illinois (A)	Michigan State (A)	Penn State (H) Wisconsin (A) Michigan State (H) Northwestern (A) Indiana (A) Minnesota (H) Northwestern (H) Ohio State (A) Michigan (A)
Wisconsin	8-1	Michigan (A) Iowa (H) Illinois (H) Penn State (A) Northwestern (H) Michigan (H) Indiana (H) Minnesota (A)	Purdue (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

Yes, I'm afraid that this season is officially lost. Michigan has now played half of their 18 Big Ten games, and their only win is against Northwestern, who are 0-8 in the Big Ten. Since Michigan plays Northwestern again, along with Penn State (twice), they might win a couple more games, and avoid finishing dead last in the Big Ten, but that's about as good as it's going to get.

So, what's the problem here? Is this a bad team, or are they just young and climbing a tough learning curve? It's a little of both: they have some talented players, but not enough, and they don't have enough teamwork. The Beilein offense is certainly intricate, with a steep learning curve, but let's face it, it's still basically just a weave. Sure, it's a complicated weave, with lots of variations and options, but it's still just a weave. The Wolverines have played 21 games now, and they should be a lot better at running this offense by now.

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

Date	Opponent	Site	Result	Score	Record
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.	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	L	77-65	5-16 (1-8)
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 plays two games this week. On Tuesday (02/05/2008, 7:00 p.m.), they play at Ohio State, then on Saturday (02/09/2008, 4:00 p.m.), they play Penn State, in Crisler Arena. The OSU game is on ESPN, so tune by for that one, come on down to Crisler for the PSU game, and check back here next week to see what happened, and why.

Go Blue!