02/11/2008 – Week #16 – Finally, Another Big Ten Win (And Another Loss)

The Week In Review

The University of Michigan men's basketball team played two games last week, and they won one and lost one. On Tuesday (02/05/2008), they lost at Ohio State, 65-55, then on Saturday (02/09/2008), they beat Penn State in Crisler Arena, 68-63. The win and the loss leave Michigan with a record of 6-17, 2-9 in the Big Ten. The win ended a 6-game losing streak for Michigan.

The OSU game was yet another game that Michigan could have won, but they folded down the stretch. They controlled the tempo for most of the game, and they actually led by 4 points (52-48) with 8:34 left, then OSU went on a 17-3 run to end the game. These offensive droughts are easily the biggest story of this season.

Michigan had another bad scoring drought in the first 5:30 of the 2nd half of the Penn State game, to turn a 6-point halftime lead (32-26) into a 6-point deficit (38-32), but they managed to undo the damage by the end of the game, and pull out a much-needed 2nd Big Ten win. It was a very exciting finish, and it gave UM some valuable experience at playing the last few minutes of a close game for a win. Sure, Penn State is one of the "bottom feeders" this year (and just about every year) in the Big Ten, but they do have a better overall (11-12) and Big Ten (3-8) record than Michigan, and they did upset Michigan State last week, so they're not exactly chopped liver.

Game Statistics

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

Team	Field goals	3-Pointers	Free throws
Michigan	20-50 (40.0%)	9-26 (34.6%)	6-7 (85.7%)
Ohio State	24-51 (47.1%)	7-16 (43.8%)	10-15 (66.7%)
Advantage	Ohio State	Ohio State	Michigan

OSU won this one with overall shooting. Those 4 extra baskets made all the difference. They also made more free throws than UM attempted. Sure, they didn't shoot as good a percentage from the line, those extra 4 points helped in a close game.

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

Team	Rebounds	Assists	Turnovers	Blocks	Steals
Michigan	24	12	12	4	7
Ohio State	34	14	13	3	6
Advantage	OSU	OSU	Michigan	Michigan	Michigan

All of these stats are too close to make much difference, except for Rebounds, where OSU dominated. UM total (24) for Rebounds is pretty pathetic.

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

Team	Field goals	3-Pointers	Free throws
Michigan	28-52 (53.8%)	6-18 (33.3%)	6-12 (50.0%)
Penn State	21-58 (36.2%)	10-30 (33.3%)	11-15 (73.3%)
Advantage	Michigan	Even	Penn State

There's your game-winning stat: overall shooting. Those 7 extra baskets were the winning margin, despite PSU's 4 extra 3-pointers.

It's ridiculous that a major conference basketball team would shoot 50% from the free throw line. Most high school teams shoot better than that.

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

Team	Rebounds	Assists	Turnovers	Blocks	Steals
Michigan	32	11	14	7	2
Penn State	33	12	12	1	5
Advantage	PSU	PSU	PSU	Michigan	PSU

Once again, these stats are all very close, except for Blocks. Those 6 extra blocks helped preserve the victory.

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
01/22/2008	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
02/05/2008	At Ohio State	9-26 (34.6%)	L	Yes
02/09/2008	Penn State	6-18 (33.3%)	W	N/A
Totals		164-515 (31.8%)		17-1

The theory continues to hold. This is an offense that lives and dies with the 3-pointer.

Individual Statistics

Ron Coleman is finally 100% healthy again, so Coach Beilein changed his starting lineup to start Coleman in place of Jevohn Shepherd.

Here's how the starters did this week:

Player	Field Goals		3-Pointers		Free Throws		Points	
	OSU	PSU	OSU	PSU	OSU	PSU	OSU	PSU
Ron Coleman	1-8	0-2	1-6	0-2	0-0	0-0	3	0
Kelvin Grady	4-7	1-4	3-6	0-1	0-0	0-2	11	2
Manny Harris	3-7	7-13	1-4	1-3	0-0	1-3	7	16
DeShawn Sims	2-7	6-12	0-2	1-4	2-2	3-3	6	16
Ekpe Udoh	3-4	4-5	1-1	0-0	0-0	0-1	7	8
Totals	13-33 39.4%	18-36 50.0%	6-19 31.6%	2-10 20.0%	2-2 100.0%	4-9 44.4%	34	42

As a group, the starters had a mediocre week. Their percentages are all over the place, and they didn't score enough points in either game.

Individually, no one scored in double figures in both games. Grady was the only UM player to hit double figures vs. OSU, and Harris and Sims were the only starters to do it in the Penn State game. Harris was held to less than 10 points in the OSU game, for only the 3rd time this season. Udoh turned in 2 solid games on offense, and had 10 blocked shots for the week (4 vs. OSU and 6 vs. PSU). Coleman didn't do much this week.

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	
	OSU	PSU	OSU	PSU	OSU	PSU	OSU	PSU
Zack Gibson	2-5	2-3	0-0	1-2	0-0	1-2	4	6
C.J. Lee	1-1	1-1	0-0	0-0	1-1	1-1	3	3
David Merritt	0-2	0-0	0-0	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0
Jevohn Shepherd	2-4	2-5	2-4	0-1	0-0	0-0	6	4
Anthony Wright	2-5	5-7	1-3	3-5	3-4	0-0	8	13
Totals	7-17 41.2%	10-16 62.5%	3-7 42.9%	4-8 50.0%	4-5 80.0%	2-3 66.7%	21	26

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 Wright hit double figures, and only in one game (PSU), although he came close in the OSU game. Gibson and Shepherd did OK, but Lee and Merritt didn't contribute much.

Big Ten This Week

Here are the current Big Ten standings, after Week #6 of league play:

Team	Big Ten			Overall		
	Wins	Losses	Percent	Wins	Losses	Percent
Purdue	10	1	0.909	19	5	0.792
Indiana	9	1	0.900	20	3	0.870

Wisconsin	9	2	0.818	19	4	0.826
Michigan State	8	2	0.800	20	3	0.870
Ohio State	7	4	0.636	16	8	0.667
Minnesota	5	5	0.500	15	7	0.682
Iowa	4	8	0.333	11	14	0.440
Penn State	3	8	0.273	11	12	0.478
Illinois	2	9	0.182	10	14	0.417
Michigan	2	9	0.182	6	17	0.261
Northwestern	0	10	0.000	7	14	0.333

Here are the results from last week's games:

Tuesday (02/05/2008)
Michigan lost at Ohio State, 65-55
Penn State lost at Purdue, 67-53

Wednesday (02/06/2008)
Minnesota won at Northwestern, 92-72
Wisconsin won at Iowa, 60-54

Thursday (02/07/2008)
Indiana won at Illinois, 83-79

Saturday (02/09/2008)
Penn State lost at Michigan, 68-63
Iowa lost at Minnesota, 63-50
Northwestern lost at Michigan State, 70-55
Purdue won at Wisconsin, 72-67

Sunday (02/10/2008)
Indiana won at Ohio State, 59-53

The home teams didn't do well at all this week, going 4-5. Of course, the losing home teams were Northwestern, Iowa, Illinois, Wisconsin, and Ohio State. Other than Wisconsin, these home losses were not upsets, but the Wisconsin home loss was very surprising. Before this loss, Wisconsin was 50-2 in Big Ten games in the Kohl Center in the seven seasons that Bo Ryan has been their coach. It was a huge upset.

Here are the games scheduled for the upcoming week (Week #7):

Tuesday (02/12/2008)
Michigan State at Purdue
Illinois at Minnesota

Wednesday (02/13/2008)
Wisconsin at Indiana
Ohio State at Northwestern

Thursday (02/14/2008)
Michigan at Iowa

Saturday (02/16/2008)

Minnesota at Wisconsin
Purdue at Northwestern
Illinois at Penn State
Michigan State at Indiana

Sunday (02/17/2008)
Ohio State at Michigan

The first half of the Big Ten schedule didn't feature many games between the contenders, but the second half is full of them. There are 3 big games this week:

- Michigan State at Purdue on Tuesday. MSU has 2 tough games on the road this week. They can't afford to lose either of them if they want to stay in the race for the Big Ten crown. Purdue is now all alone in 1st place, and they're very tough at home.
- Wisconsin at Indiana on Wednesday. The loser of this one falls out of contention for the Big Ten title.
- Michigan State at Indiana on Saturday. This is the 2nd of MSU's 2 tough games this week. IU is even tougher at home than Purdue.

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

Team	Record	Wins	Losses	Remaining Games
Illinois	2-9	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	9-1	Iowa (A) Michigan (A) Illinois (H) Minnesota (A) Penn State (H) Iowa (H) Northwestern (H) Illinois (A) Ohio State (A)	Wisconsin (A)	Wisconsin (H) Michigan State (H) Purdue (H) Northwestern (A) Ohio State (H) Michigan State (A) Minnesota (H) Penn State (A)
Iowa	4-8	Michigan State (H) Michigan (A) Penn State (H) Ohio State (H)	Indiana (H) Wisconsin (A) Ohio State (A) Purdue (H) Indiana (A) Purdue (A) Wisconsin (H) Minnesota (A)	Michigan (H) Northwestern (H) Michigan State (A) Penn State (A) Illinois (H) Northwestern (A)
Michigan	2-9	Northwestern (A) Penn State (H)	Wisconsin (H) Purdue (A) Indiana (H) Illinois (A) Iowa (H)	Iowa (A) Ohio State (H) Minnesota (A) Illinois (H) Northwestern (H)

			Wisconsin (A) Michigan State (A) Minnesota (H) Ohio State (A)	Penn State (A) Purdue (H)
Michigan State	8-2	Minnesota (H) Purdue (H) Ohio State (H) Minnesota (A) Northwestern (A) Michigan (H) Illinois (H) Northwestern (H)	Iowa (A) Penn State (A)	Purdue (A) Indiana (A) Penn State (H) Iowa (H) Wisconsin (A) Indiana (H) Illinois (A) Ohio State (A)
Minnesota	5-5	Northwestern (H) Penn State (A) Michigan (A) Northwestern (A) Iowa (H)	Michigan State (A) Indiana (H) Michigan State (H) Ohio State (A) Wisconsin (H)	Illinois (H) Wisconsin (A) Michigan (H) Penn State (H) Purdue (A) Ohio State (H) Indiana (A) Illinois (A)
Northwestern	0-10		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	7-4	Illinois (A) Northwestern (H) Iowa (H) Illinois (H) Minnesota (H) Penn State (A) Michigan (H)	Purdue (A) Michigan State (A) Iowa (A) Indiana (H)	Northwestern (A) Michigan (A) Wisconsin (H) Indiana (A) Minnesota (A) Purdue (H) Michigan State (H)
Penn State	3-8	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	10-1	Michigan (H) Ohio State (H) Iowa (A) Illinois (H) Penn State (A) Wisconsin (H)	Michigan State (A)	Michigan State (H) Northwestern (A) Indiana (A) Minnesota (H) Northwestern (H) Ohio State (A)

		Iowa (H) Illinois (A) Penn State (H) Wisconsin (A)		Michigan (A)
Wisconsin	9-2	Michigan (A) Iowa (H) Illinois (H) Penn State (A) Northwestern (H) Michigan (H) Indiana (H) Minnesota (A) Iowa (A)	Purdue (A) Purdue (H)	Indiana (A) Minnesota (H) Illinois (A) Ohio State (A) Michigan State (H) Penn State (H) Northwestern (A)

The Big Ten race is starting to solidify. It looks like Purdue is the team to beat, although Indiana, Wisconsin, and Michigan State all stand a chance of catching them. Here's who the contenders have left to play:

Team	Games vs. Contenders		Games vs. Non-contenders	
	Home	Away	Home	Away
Indiana	Wisconsin Michigan State Purdue	Michigan State	Ohio State Minnesota	Northwestern Penn State
Michigan State	Indiana	Purdue Indiana Wisconsin	Penn State Iowa	Illinois Ohio State
Purdue	Michigan State	Indiana	Minnesota Northwestern	Northwestern Ohio State Michigan
Wisconsin	Michigan State	Indiana	Minnesota Penn State	Illinois Ohio State Northwestern

It looks like Purdue and Wisconsin have the easiest remaining schedules, but Purdue has a 1 game lead on Wisconsin. Of the other 2 contenders, Indiana has an easier schedule than MSU, since they have 3 of their 4 "showdown" games at home, while MSU has 3 of their 4 big games on the road.

The Big Picture

In a season where wins have been hard to come by for Michigan, any win is a good win. Fortunately for Michigan, the rest of the Big Ten schedule is a lot easier than the first half.

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

Date	Opponent	Site	Result	Score	Record
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	L	65-55	5-17 (1-9)
02/09/2008 (Sat)	Penn State	Ann Arbor	W	68-63	6-17 (2-9)
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)	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 Thursday (02/14/2008, 9:00 p.m. EST), they play at Iowa, then on Sunday (02/17/2008, 1:00 p.m.), they play Ohio State, in Crisler Arena. The Iowa game is on ESPN, and the OSU game is on CBS, so tune in or come on down to Crisler, and check back here next week to see what happened, and why.

Go Blue!