03/10/2008 – Week #20 – A Disappointing End To The Regular Season

The Week In Review

The University of Michigan men's basketball team only played one game last week, and they lost it. On Sunday (03/09/2008), they lost to (#15) Purdue in Crisler Arena, 72-58. The loss leaves Michigan with a final regular season record of 9-21, 5-13 in the Big Ten, which is far from what most of us expected, even in a rebuilding year with a new coach.

The game itself was very frustrating, since Michigan outplayed Purdue for a good portion of the game, but seldom had much of a lead to show for it. Every time it looked like UM was going to build a significant lead, either a bad bounce, a missed free throw, or (most of the time) a bad call would derail them. I haven't said much about the officiating this season, mostly because it hasn't really affected the final result of any of the games, but the Purdue game was different. The officiating was bad and biased against Michigan, and it did cost Michigan the game. Sure, Purdue played well down the stretch, when they outscored Michigan 24-8 in the last 7:38, but the only reason they were within striking distance at the end was the poor officiating.

I know, I know, sour grapes. Still, I've been watching Big Ten games since 1974, and I know bad officiating when I see it. Even if Michigan had managed to win this game, it wouldn't have made much difference in the grand scheme of things, but it's still very frustrating to watch the officials take the game away. It is encouraging to know that UM can play well enough to beat a Top-25 team in a fair fight.

Game Statistics

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

Team	Field goals	3-Pointers	Free throws
Michigan	20-56 (35.7%)	7-26 (26.9%)	11-18 (61.1%)
Purdue	22-55 (40.0%)	8-18 (44.4%)	20-25 (80.0%)
Advantage	Purdue	Purdue	Purdue

Purdue dominated these stats, and that's why they won the game. Michigan's free throw shooting continues to be inconsistent, and often poor.

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

Team	Rebounds	Assists	Turnovers	Blocks	Steals
Michigan	41	17	24	4	9
Purdue	33	17	15	2	15
Advantage	Michigan	Even	Purdue	Michigan	Purdue

What did Michigan do with those extra 8 possessions that resulted from +8 rebounds? Why, they turned them into +9 turnovers. That's a recipe for disaster.

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
02/14/2008	At Iowa	7-19 (36.8%)	W	N/A
02/17/2008	Ohio State	10-24 (41.7%)	W	Yes
02/21/2008	At Minnesota	5-26 (19.2%)	L	Yes
02/23/2008	Illinois	5-21 (23.8%)	W	N/A
02/26/2008	Northwestern	7-21 (33.3%)	L	Yes
03/01/2008	At Penn State	9-31 (29.0%)	L	Yes
03/09/2008	Purdue	7-26 (26.9%)	L	Yes
Totals		214-683 (31.3%)		22-1

The theory continues to hold. The Purdue game is another solid example.

Individual Statistics

Since it was Senior Day, Coach Beilein started his only senior, Ron Coleman, instead of Anthony Wright.

Here's how the starters did:

Player	Field Goals	3-Pointers	Free Throws	Points
Ron Coleman	1-3	1-2	0-0	3
Kelvin Grady	0-5	0-3	0-0	0
Manny Harris	3-8	1-3	3-4	10
DeShawn Sims	7-15	1-6	4-7	19
Ekpe Udoh	5-12	1-1	2-2	13
Totals	16-43 37.2%	4-15 26.7%	9-13 69.2%	45

As a group, the starters had a decent game. Their percentages are reasonable, they just didn't score enough points.

Individually, it was great that 3 starters hit double figures, but it's a little deceptive, since Harris just barely hit 10, right near the end of the game, when the result was already decided. He spent over 12 minutes on the bench in the 1st half with foul trouble, and wasn't really a factor in this game. When Harris isn't scoring, Michigan will have trouble winning. Harris also led the team with 7 turnovers, mostly from trying to get too fancy when driving to the hoop.

The first big of good news in this game was that Sims finally broke out of his shooting and scoring slump, although he still hasn't found his 3-point shot again. Regardless, it was great to see him taking and making good shots, and playing aggressively around the basket.

The other bit of good news in this game was the solid aggressive play of Udoh. He just missed a double-double, with 9 rebounds to go with his 13 points. Many of his rebounds were very impressive, especially since he usually had a couple Purdue players draped all over him, whacking away at him (uncalled).

The bad news in this game was the poor shooting of Grady. He had several good open looks, and he bricked every one of them. He did a pretty good job of bringing the ball upcourt, but he made a few mistakes trying to be too aggressive forcing the ball into double- and triple-coverage with ill-advised passes. He ended up with the 2nd most turnovers in the game (5).

Coleman started the game strong, with a 3-pointer (his only points) in the first 3 minutes to make the score 5-0. From then on, he only took 2 other shots, and missed them both. I'm sure he hoped for a lot better things on Senior Day.

Coach Beilein went 5-deep on the bench in the Purdue game, but only because he put freshman Adam Block in during the last minute.

Here's how the bench players did:

Player	Field Goals	3-Pointers	Free Throws	Points
Adam Block	0-0	0-0	0-0	0
Zack Gibson	0-1	0-1	2-2	2
C.J. Lee	1-1	1-1	0-0	3
Jevohn Shepherd	1-3	0-1	0-3	2
Anthony Wright	2-8	2-8	0-0	6
Totals	4-13 30.8%	3-11 27.2%	2-5 40.0%	13

As a group, the bench players had a mediocre game. Their shooting percentages were lousy, and they didn't chip in many points.

Individually, none of the bench players contributed much offensively. Wright did pop in two 3-pointers, but he had to take 8 shots to get there. Lee did a nice job filling in for Harris, when he was on the bench with foul troubles. Gibson and Shepherd didn't do much, and Block was only in for 41 seconds.

Big Ten This Week

Here are the final Big Ten standings, after Week #10 of league play:

Team	Big Ten			Overall		
	Wins	Losses	Percent	Wins	Losses	Percent
Wisconsin	16	2	0.889	26	4	0.867
Purdue	15	3	0.833	24	7	0.774
Indiana	14	4	0.778	25	6	0.806
Michigan State	12	6	0.667	24	7	0.774
Ohio State	10	8	0.556	19	12	0.613
Minnesota	8	10	0.444	18	12	0.600
Penn State	7	11	0.389	15	15	0.500
Iowa	6	12	0.333	13	18	0.419
Illinois	5	13	0.278	13	18	0.419
Michigan	5	13	0.278	9	21	0.300
Northwestern	1	17	0.056	8	21	0.276

Here are the results from last week's games:

Tuesday (03/04/2008)
Iowa won at Northwestern, 67-62
Purdue lost at Ohio State, 80-77

Wednesday (03/05/2008)
Minnesota lost at Indiana, 69-55
Penn State lost at Wisconsin, 77-41

Thursday (03/06/2008)
Michigan State won at Illinois, 59-51

Saturday (03/08/2008)
Minnesota lost at Illinois, 67-58
Wisconsin won at Northwestern, 65-52

Sunday (03/09/2008)
Purdue won at Michigan, 72-58
Michigan State lost at Ohio State, 63-54
Indiana lost at Penn State, 68-64

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

- Purdue losing at Ohio State on Tuesday. Sure, OSU is tough at home, but Purdue was playing for a share of the Big Ten title.
- Michigan State losing at Ohio State on Sunday. Once again, OSU is tough at home, but MSU is supposed to be a Sweet 16 team. They have looked very beatable several times this season.
- Indiana losing to Penn State on Sunday. I guess Michigan's loss at Penn State last week doesn't look quite so bad now.

The regular season is over, so it's on to The Big Ten Tournament, which is being held in Conseco Fieldhouse in Indianapolis this week. The top 5 teams get byes to Friday, and the

bottom 6 teams play on Thursday to trim the field down to 8, which is a nice "power of 2". Here's the full schedule, with the seeds in parentheses:

Thursday (03/13/2008)
Game 1: (#8) Iowa vs. (#9) Michigan
Game 2: (#7) Penn State vs. (#10) Illinois
Game 3: (#6) Minnesota vs. (#11) Northwestern

Friday (03/14/2008)
Game 4: (#1) Wisconsin vs. Game 1 winner
Game 5: (#4) Michigan State vs. (#5) Ohio State
Game 6: (#2) Purdue vs. Game 2 winner
Game 7: (#3) Indiana vs. Game 3 winner

Saturday (03/15/2008)
Game 8: Game 4 winner vs. Game 5 winner
Game 9: Game 6 winner vs. Game 7 winner

Sunday (03/16/2008)
Game 10: Game 8 winner vs. Game 9 winner

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

Team	Record	Wins	Losses	Remaining Games
Illinois	5-13	Michigan (H) Northwestern (H) Minnesota (A) Iowa (A) Minnesota (H)	Ohio State (H) Penn State (H) Wisconsin (A) Indiana (A) Purdue (A) Ohio State (A) Michigan State (A) Purdue (H) Indiana (H) Penn State (A) Wisconsin (H) Michigan (A) Michigan State (H)	
Indiana	14-4	Iowa (A) Michigan (A) Illinois (H) Minnesota (A) Penn State (H) Iowa (H) Northwestern (H) Illinois (A) Ohio State (A) Michigan State (H) Purdue (H) Northwestern (A) Ohio State (H) Minnesota (H)	Wisconsin (A) Wisconsin (H) Michigan State (A) Penn State (A)	
Iowa	6-12	Michigan State (H) Michigan (A)	Indiana (H) Wisconsin (A)	

		Penn State (H) Ohio State (H) Northwestern (H) Northwestern (A)	Ohio State (A) Purdue (H) Indiana (A) Purdue (A) Wisconsin (H) Minnesota (A) Michigan (H) Michigan State (A) Penn State (A) Illinois (H)	
Michigan	5-13	Northwestern (A) Penn State (H) Iowa (A) Ohio State (H) Illinois (H)	Wisconsin (H) Purdue (A) Indiana (H) Illinois (A) Iowa (H) Wisconsin (A) Michigan State (A) Minnesota (H) Ohio State (A) Minnesota (A) Northwestern (H) Penn State (A) Purdue (H)	
Michigan State	12-6	Minnesota (H) Purdue (H) Ohio State (H) Minnesota (A) Northwestern (A) Michigan (H) Illinois (H) Northwestern (H) Penn State (H) Iowa (H) Indiana (H) Illinois (A)	Iowa (A) Penn State (A) Purdue (A) Indiana (A) Wisconsin (A) Ohio State (A)	
Minnesota	8-10	Northwestern (H) Penn State (A) Michigan (A) Northwestern (A) Iowa (H) Michigan (H) Penn State (H) Ohio State (H)	Michigan State (A) Indiana (H) Michigan State (H) Ohio State (A) Wisconsin (H) Illinois (H) Wisconsin (A) Purdue (A) Indiana (A) Illinois (A)	
Northwestern	1-17	Michigan (A)	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) Purdue (A) Iowa (H) Wisconsin (H)	
Ohio State	10-8	Illinois (A) Northwestern (H) Iowa (H) Illinois (H) Minnesota (H) Penn State (A) Michigan (H) Northwestern (A) Purdue (H) Michigan State (H)	Purdue (A) Michigan State (A) Iowa (A) Indiana (H) Michigan (A) Wisconsin (H) Indiana (A) Minnesota (A)	
Penn State	7-11	Northwestern (A) Illinois (A) Michigan State (H) Illinois (H) Iowa (H) Michigan (H) Indiana (H)	Minnesota (H) Wisconsin (H) Indiana (A) Purdue (H) Iowa (A) Ohio State (H) Purdue (A) Michigan (A) Michigan State (A) Minnesota (A) Wisconsin (A)	
Purdue	15-3	Michigan (H) Ohio State (H) Iowa (A) Illinois (H) Penn State (A) Wisconsin (H) Iowa (H) Illinois (A) Penn State (H) Wisconsin (A) Michigan State (H) Northwestern (A) Minnesota (H) Northwestern (H) Michigan (A)	Michigan State (A) Indiana (A) Ohio State (A)	
Wisconsin	16-2	Michigan (A) Iowa (H) Illinois (H) Penn State (A) Northwestern (H) Michigan (H) Indiana (H) Minnesota (A)	Purdue (A) Purdue (H)	

		Iowa (A) Indiana (A) Minnesota (H) Illinois (A) Ohio State (A) Michigan State (H) Penn State (H) Northwestern (A)		

The Big Picture

Well, the regular season is over, and it was quite a disappointment. Michigan lost some of the games they should have won, lost most of the "toss up" games, and didn't spring any upsets. With their miserable overall record, they are not eligible for the NIT, so their only hope to keep playing is to win the Big Ten Tournament, and get the automatic berth in the NCAA Tournament. They can win their first round game against Iowa, but if they do, they'll certainly have their hands full against Wisconsin. I don't see it happening.

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.	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	W	60-52	7-17 (3-9)
02/17/2008 (Sun)	Ohio State	Ann Arbor	W	80-70	8-17 (4-9)
02/21/2008 (Thu)	Minnesota	Minneapolis, Minn.	L	69-60	8-18 (4-10)
02/23/2008 (Sat)	Illinois	Ann Arbor	W	49-43	9-18 (5-10)
02/26/2008 (Tue)	Northwestern	Ann Arbor	L	62-60	9-19 (5-11)
03/01/2008 (Sat)	Penn State	State College, Pa.	L	69-61	9-20 (5-12)
03/09/2008 (Sun)	Purdue	Ann Arbor	L	72-58	9-21 (5-13)

Date	Opponent	Site	Result	Score	Record
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 Big Ten Tournament schedule above, Michigan plays in the first round of the tournament on Thursday (03/13/2008, noon EDT) vs. Iowa. The game is only on the much-despised Big Ten Network. Check back here next week to see what happened, and why.

Go Blue!