12/15/2008 – Week #07 – A Convincing Victory

The Week In Review

The University of Michigan men's basketball team only played one game this week, and they won it. On Saturday (12/13/2008), they beat Eastern Michigan 91-60, in Crisler Arena. The win raises Michigan's record to 7-2.

This game was exactly the kind of game that Michigan has to win from now on. In the past, they have lost these "should win" games, and it's come back to haunt them when they just miss out on either the NIT or NCAA Tournaments. Not this season. With the exception of the Savannah State game on 11/29/2008, which Michigan eventually won (66-64) in overtime, the Wolverines have "taken care of business" in the games they should win.

The game itself was very entertaining. Eastern actually led by 7 points (26-19) with 7:49 left in the 1st half. Michigan used a barrage of 3-pointers to tie the game up (30-30) with 4:15 left, then hit some more 3-pointers to close the half with a 14-4 run, for a 44-34 lead at halftime. By the 1st media timeout of the second half (15:48 to go), Michigan had already expanded the halftime lead to 15 (53-38), and they finally got the lead up over 20 points (73-52) with 8:38 left in the game. At that point it was over, and the rest of the game was "garbage time".

It was a solid, convincing win, and other than the slow start, Michigan looked good on offense and defense. After the tense loss at Maryland last Wednesday, and the even more tense and emotional win over Duke last Saturday, Michigan really needed a low-stress game, and they got it.

Game Statistics

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

Team	Field goals	3-Pointers	Free throws
Michigan	35-67 (52.2%)	16-33 (48.5%)	5-9 (55.6%)
Eastern Michigan	25-62 (40.3%)	2-11 (18.2%)	8-10 (80.0%)
Advantage	Michigan	Michigan	EMU

Other than Free Throws, these are some of the most lopsided stats you'll ever see, especially the 3-point shooting stats. Michigan set new school records by taking 33 3-pointers, and by hitting 16 of them. The 48.5% is their best 3-point shooting percentage of the season.

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

Team	Rebounds	Assists	Turnovers	Blocks	Steals
Michigan	28	24	5	1	6
Eastern Michigan	44	9	17	3	1
Advantage	EMU	Michigan	Michigan	EMU	Michigan

Some of these stats are really amazing. First of all, it's amazing that Michigan got out-rebounded by 16 boards, but still won handily. Next, the 24 assists are the most Michigan has had since 12/2/2006 against Radford. Finally, the 5 turnovers are the least Michigan has had since 1/11/2004 against Indiana. It was all very impressive.

Season 3-Point Shooting

The way UM's offense is set up, they need to get off at least 20 3-pointers, and hit at least 40% of them to win the big games. I'm not saying that they'll lose if they don't get 20/40, I'm just saying that if they do get 20/40, they'll win. Here's how things have gone so far:

Date	Opponent	3-Point Shooting	Result	Fits Theory?
11/06/2008	Saginaw Valley State (exhibition)	11-24 (45.8%)	W	Y
11/11/2008	Michigan Tech	8-24 (33.3%)	W	Y
11/12/2008	Northeastern	5-14 (35.7%)	W	Y
11/20/2008	UCLA	5-20 (25.0%)	W	Y
11/21/2008	Duke	6-22 (27.3%)	L	Y
11/25/2008	Norfolk State	9-27 (33.3%)	W	Y
11/29/2008	Savannah State	4-22 (18.2%)	W	Y
12/03/2008	Maryland	12-29 (41.4%)	L	N
12/06/2008	Duke	7-16 (43.8%)	W	Y
12/13/2008	Eastern Michigan	16-33 (48.5%)	W	Y
Totals		83-231 (35.9%)		9-1

Not only did Michigan take (a lot) more than 20 3-pointers, they made (a lot) more than 40% of them. This is how the Beilein offense is supposed to work, and it worked very well against Eastern Michigan.

Individual Statistics

Coach Beilein wasn't at the Eastern Michigan game, due to acute peripheral vertigo stemming from an inner ear infection. In his place, Assistant Head Coach Jerry Dunn coached the team, and he did a fine job. He used the same starting lineup that Beilein used in the Duke game. Here's how the starters did:

Player	Field Goals	3-Pointers	Free Throws	Points
Stu Douglass	1-2	1-2	0-0	3
Manny Harris	8-16	4-7	2-3	22
David Merritt	3-6	2-3	0-0	8
Jevohn Shepherd	6-9	1-3	0-0	13
DeShawn Sims	7-17	1-5	3-6	18
Totals	25-50 50.0%	9-20 45.0%	5-9 55.6%	64

As a group, the starters did pretty well this week. Their percentages are pretty good, except for free-throw shooting, and they outscored Eastern Michigan by themselves.

Individually, Harris, Sims, and Shepherd all hit double figures, and Merritt came close. Harris only had 2 points in the first half, when he sat out most of the half with 2 fouls. He was on fire in the 2nd half. Sims had a solid game, and Shepherd had a career high with 13 points. Only Douglass had an unimpressive game.

Here's how the bench players did this week:

Player	Field Goals	3-Pointers	Free Throws	Points
Zack Gibson	2-4	1-3	0-0	5
Kelvin Grady	4-5	3-4	0-0	11
C.J. Lee	2-3	2-3	0-0	6
Zack Novak	0-2	0-1	0-0	0
Eric Puls	1-1	1-1	0-0	3

Anthony Wright	1-2	0-1	0-0	2
Totals	10-17 58.8%	7-13 53.8%	0-0 0.0%	27

As a group, the bench players did very well. Their shooting percentages are excellent, and they scored a reasonable number of points.

Individually, Grady was the only bench player to hit double figures. But, more importantly, he played a key role in getting Michigan back in the lead when Harris went out with foul trouble. With 9:15 left in the half, and EMU up 21-16, he hit a 3-pointer to get UM back within 2. He also hit his next 2 3-point attempts. He really sparked the team.

None of the other bench players did very much.

The Big Picture

Michigan won a game they should have won, and they won it convincingly. They still have 3 more winnable non-conference games left before they start Big Ten play.

Here's the 2008-2009 schedule/results:

Date	Opponent	Site	Result	Score	Record
11/06/2008 (Thu)	Saginaw Valley State (exh)	Ann Arbor	W	81-55	0-0
2K Sports Classic benefiting Coaches vs. Cancer					
11/11/2008 (Tue)	Michigan Tech	Ann Arbor	W	77-55	1-0
11/12/2008 (Wed)	Northeastern	Ann Arbor	W	76-56	2-0
11/20/2008 (Thu)	UCLA	New York, NY	W	55-52	3-0
11/21/2008 (Fri)	Duke	New York, NY	L	71-56	3-1
11/25/2008 (Tue)	Norfolk State	Ann Arbor	W	83-49	4-1
11/29/2008 (Sat)	Savannah State	Ann Arbor	W	66-64 (ot)	5-1
ACC/Big Ten Challenge					
12/03/2008 (Wed)	at Maryland	College Park, MD	L	75-70	5-2
12/06/2008 (Sat)	Duke	Ann Arbor	W	81-73	6-2
12/13/2008 (Sat)	Eastern Michigan	Ann Arbor	W	91-60	7-2
12/20/2008 (Sat)	vs. Oakland	Auburn Hills, MI			
12/22/2008 (Mon)	Florida Gulf Coast	Ann Arbor			
12/29/2008 (Mon)	North Carolina Central	Ann Arbor			
12/31/2009 (Wed)	Wisconsin	Ann Arbor			
01/04/2009 (Sun)	Illinois	Ann Arbor			
01/07/2009 (Wed)	at Indiana	Bloomington, IN			
01/11/2009 (Sun)	Iowa	Ann Arbor			
01/14/2009 (Wed)	at Illinois	Champaign, IL			
01/17/2009 (Sat)	Ohio State	Ann Arbor			
01/20/2009 (Tue)	at Penn State	State College, PA			
01/24/2009 (Sat)	Northwestern	Ann Arbor			
01/28/2009 (Wed)	at Ohio State	Columbus, OH			
01/31/2009 (Sat)	at Purdue	West Lafayette, IN			
02/05/2009 (Thu)	Penn State	Ann Arbor			
02/07/2009 (Sat)	at Connecticut	Storrs, CT			
02/10/2009 (Tue)	Michigan State	Ann Arbor			
02/15/2009 (Sun)	at Northwestern	Evanston, IL			
02/19/2009 (Thu)	Minnesota	Ann Arbor			
02/22/2009 (Sun)	at Iowa	Iowa City, IA			
02/26/2009 (Thu)	Purdue	Ann Arbor			
03/01/2009 (Sun)	at Wisconsin	Madison, WI			
03/07/2009 (Sat)	at Minnesota	Minneapolis, MN			

Date	Opponent	Site	Result	Score	Record
or 03/08/2009 (Sun)					
Big Ten Tournament					
03/12/2009 (Thu)	First Round	Indianapolis, IN			
03/13/2009 (Fri)	Quarterfinal	Indianapolis, IN			
03/14/2009 (Sat)	Semifinal	Indianapolis, IN			
03/15/2009 (Sun)	Championship	Indianapolis, IN			

The Upcoming Week

As you can see in the schedule above, Michigan only plays one game this week. On Saturday (12/20/2008, 4:00 p.m.) they play in The Palace Of Auburn Hills vs. Oakland University. This is a game that Michigan should win, but you never know. The game is being televised locally on Fox Sports Net – Detroit, so tune by to check out the Wolverines.

Go Blue!