12/22/2008 – Week #08 – Another Solid Win

The Week In Review

The University of Michigan men's basketball team only played one game this week, and they won it. On Saturday (12/20/2008), they beat Oakland University 89-76, in The Palace Of Auburn Hills. The win raises Michigan's record to 8-2.

This was another game that UM should have won, and they did. Of the unranked non-conference opponents, Maryland and Oakland were the two most difficult, and Michigan beat Oakland and almost beat Maryland.

The Oakland game was very entertaining, especially if you like offense and 3-pointers. UM hit their first four shots, and they were all 3-pointers. Oakland also hit their first four shots, but only two of them were 3-pointers. Michigan went on an 18-0 run in the 1st half, and it looked like they were going to make the game into a blowout, then OU came back. Still, Michigan led by 8 at halftime (42-34), and they never let OU get any closer than 4 points in the 2nd half, before they sealed up the win in the last 4 minutes.

I expected Oakland to stay in the game with 3-pointers, and they hit a few, but the real problem was Oakland's 6'11" center, Keith Benson. Michigan didn't have anyone who could stop him. That's going to be a problem the rest of the season, whenever UM plays a team with a big center. Incidentally, Duke has a big center (7'1" Brian Zoubek), and they beat up on Michigan when he was in the game, but Duke's legendary coach (Mike Krzyzewski) kept pulling him out, and Michigan won the game, 81-73. I still don't understand what Coach K was thinking, but I'm glad he did it.

Combined with the 91 points they scored last Saturday vs. Eastern Michigan, it's been a long time since UM has averaged 90 points/game. The Michigan players seem to be finally getting the Beilein system of offense, and it's lots of fun to watch when it's clicking.

Game Statistics

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

Team	Field goals	3-Pointers	Free throws
Michigan	30-61 (49.2%)	13-29 (44.8%)	16-17 (94.1%)
Oakland	28-64 (43.8%)	8-24 (33.3%)	12-19 (63.2%)
Advantage	Michigan	Michigan	Michigan

Sweep! Michigan won all three of the shooting stats. The big one is 3-point shooting, but it's hard to ignore 16-for-17 shooting at the free-throw line.

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

Team	Rebounds	Assists	Turnovers	Blocks	Steals
Michigan	36	24	5	4	3
Oakland	34	17	5	2	2
Advantage	Michigan	Michigan	Even	Michigan	Michigan

Watching the game on TV, it seemed like Oakland got most of the rebounds, but the stats show otherwise. I was impressed last week vs. EMU when Michigan got 24 assists, and they did it again! I was even more impressed last week when UM only had 5 turnovers against EMU, and they did that again too!

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. In the past, I counted a win where UM didn't hit 20/40 as "fits the theory", but no more. To fit my theory, they either have to hit 20/40 and win, or hit less than 20/40 and lose. If they win, but fail to hit 20/40, that doesn't fit my theory.

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	N
11/12/2008	Northeastern	5-14 (35.7%)	W	N
11/20/2008	UCLA	5-20 (25.0%)	W	N
11/21/2008	Duke	6-22 (27.3%)	L	Y
11/25/2008	Norfolk State	9-27 (33.3%)	W	N
11/29/2008	Savannah State	4-22 (18.2%)	W	N
12/03/2008	Maryland	12-29 (41.4%)	L	N
12/06/2008	Duke	7-16 (43.8%)	W	N
12/13/2008	Eastern Michigan	16-33 (48.5%)	W	Y
12/20/2008	Oakland	13-29 (44.8%)	W	Y
Totals		96-260 (36.9%)		4-7

Just like last week vs. Eastern Michigan, 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 Oakland.

Individual Statistics

Coach Beilein was back on the bench for the Oakland game, after missing the EMU game due to acute peripheral vertigo stemming from an inner ear infection. He used his latest starting lineup again. Here's how the starters did:

Player	Field Goals	3-Pointers	Free Throws	Points
Stu Douglass	4-7	4-7	0-0	12
Manny Harris	4-10	0-2	7-7	15
David Merritt	2-3	2-3	0-0	6
Jevohn Shepherd	0-1	0-1	1-2	1
DeShawn Sims	8-15	0-0	4-4	20
Totals	18-36 50.0%	6-13 46.2%	12-13 92.3%	54

As a group, the starters did very well this week. Their percentages are excellent, and they scored a lot of points.

Individually, Douglass, Harris, and Sims all hit double figures. Once again, Harris had a cold 1st half (0 points), but he managed to score 15 points in the 2nd half. Sims had a very good game, and Douglass hit all four of Michigan's first four shots, all 3-pointers. Merritt did what was expected from him, and only Shepherd had an unimpressive game, including the only miss from the free-throw line for the whole team.

Here's how the bench players did this week:

Player	Field Goals	3-Pointers	Free Throws	Points
Zack Gibson	2-3	0-1	2-2	6
Kelvin Grady	2-4	2-4	0-0	6
C.J. Lee	0-1	0-0	0-0	0
Laval Lucas-Perry	4-7	4-6	2-2	14
Zack Novak	4-10	1-5	0-0	9
Totals	12-25 48.0%	7-16 43.8%	4-4 100.0%	35

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

Individually, the big story was Laval Lucas-Perry. He transferred from Arizona exactly one year ago, and he became eligible just in time to play in the Oakland game. He's been practicing with the team for 12 months, but everyone expected him to have a few rough games before he "shook off the rust". Wrong. He came in at the 11:55 mark, and took his first shot at the 10:24 mark. It was a 3-pointer, and it went in! Same thing with his next shot, at the 9:50 mark, and another at the 7:42 mark. He took, and made, his 4th 3-pointer at the 4:15 mark, and at that point, he was 4-for-4 (all 3-pointers) as a Wolverine. He finally missed one at the 3:27 mark, and he ended up shooting 4-for-6 from long range, but it was still the most impressive debut I can ever remember for a Michigan player.

Lucas-Perry was the only bench player to hit double figures, although Novak came close. Gibson and Grady contributed, but Lee didn't do much. The odd man out was Anthony Wright, who didn't play. I don't know if Beilein is going to limit his bench to 5 players, except for garbage time in blowouts, but with the addition of Lucas-Perry there are now 6 bench players fighting for playing time.

Incidentally, Beilein officially announced that 7'1" freshman center Ben Cronin will be redshirted this season. I mistakenly thought that he had used up his redshirt year when he played in two games, but apparently that would only be true if he weren't being redshirted for medical reasons. He has a hip injury that will require surgery.

The Big Picture

Michigan won another game they should have won, and they won it convincingly. They still have 2 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

Date	Opponent	Site	Result	Score	Record
12/20/2008 (Sat)	vs. Oakland	Auburn Hills, MI	W	89-76	8-2
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) or 03/08/2009 (Sun)	at Minnesota	Minneapolis, MN			
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 Monday (12/22/2008, 7:00 p.m.) they play Florida Gulf Coast University in Crisler Arena. This is the team that Reed Baker transferred to from Michigan after his freshman season (2006-2007). He's one of their starters now. Come on down to Crisler, and cheer on the Wolverines.

Go Blue!