

Nothing But 'Net – Week #11 (12/28/2009) – An Early Christmas Cupcake, And First Trimester Grades

The Week In Review

The University of Michigan men's basketball team only played 1 game this week, and they won it. [On Tuesday \(12/22/2009\), they beat Coppin State \(CSU\) 76-46](#), in Crisler Arena. The win raises Michigan's record to 6-5. Oh yeah, they didn't mention it at the game, but this was Michigan's 500th win in Crisler Arena. Not bad.

Coppin State was a "cupcake", and they made a nice early Christmas present for the Wolverines. After a few early lead changes, Michigan went on an impressive 13-0 run to essentially put the game out of reach, with 12:24 left in the 1st half. The rest of the game was just window dressing. Every time CSU tried to cut into UM's lead, Michigan answered the challenge by expanding the lead even more. It was no contest.

This was the kind of "feel good" win that Michigan needed, after struggling so much in the last few games, both wins and losses. This was the way we expected Michigan to play every game this season. Now, if they can only keep it going.

There was one more minor bit of UM basketball news this week: little-used redshirt sophomore forward/center [Eric Puls](#) left the team to concentrate on his studies in the Engineering department. He was a nice guy, and a good practice player, and I'm sure we all wish him well. His absence won't have much effect on the team, except maybe in practice. He was never going to be much of a factor in the games.

Game Statistics

Once again, here are the "streamlined" stats. If you want to see the full stats, check out [MGoBlue.com](#). Here are the highlights:

As a team, Michigan shot better than they have recently. They hit 49.2% (30-for-61) from the floor, which is good, and 33.3% (11-for-33) from 3-point range, which is just OK.

Four of the five starters scored in double figures, which is very impressive. [Stu Douglass](#) was the leading scorer, with a season-high 20 points and nice shooting percentages: 7-for-13 overall, and 6-for-10 from 3-point range. [DeShawn Sims](#) was right behind him, with 18 points and an even better overall shooting percentage: 8-for-12. [Zack Novak](#) had 11 points, and [Laval Lucas-Perry](#) had 10 points. So, who's missing? Surprisingly, [Manny Harris](#) was the only starter to not hit double figures, with only 5 points. Harris has hit double figures in all 10 of the previous games this season, and he's UM's leading scorer, so it was weird that he was the only starter not in double figures. I guess it was nice to know that Michigan can win without him, even if it was just Coppin State.

None of the bench players did much, but [Matt Vogrich](#) did finally hit a couple more 3-pointers. He hit 5 (on 5 attempts) in the first game ([Northern Michigan](#)), then only 1 (on 8 attempts) since then. He was 2-for-4 shooting 3's against CSU. None of the other bench players scored more than 2 points.

The Big Picture

So, the Wolverines are done with the main part of their non-conference schedule, with just the Connecticut game on 1/17/2010 remaining. They went 6-5, which is not quite what we expected. They won all their "should win" games, lost all their "should lose" games, and

went 1-4 in their "toss up" games. In all their losses, and even a few of their wins, the main culprit has been plain old-fashioned bad shooting. They have run the offense well, gotten the wide-open 3-point shots they wanted, and bricked them. Repeatedly. Everyone. It is very puzzling.

On to the Big Ten portion of the schedule. Michigan actually has a fairly reasonable start to the conference schedule. They start on the road in Bloomington (IN), a place they have traditionally had lots of trouble. Fortunately, IU is still rebuilding, and Michigan stands a decent chance of escaping with a win. Michigan returns to Crisler to play Ohio State, and that game will tell us a lot about this team. UM can beat tOSU, but they have to play well. The next 3 Big Ten games are at an improved Penn State, and home vs. an also improved Northwestern, and home vs. Indiana. Those first 5 games are crucial to Michigan's chances to go to the NCAA Tournament. A good start to the Big Ten schedule, and Michigan's back in it. A bad start, and we're looking at NIT.

See my first [Big Ten Report](#) of the season for a complete rundown of the Big Ten this season.

Here's the 2009-2010 schedule/results:

Date	Opponent	Site	Result	Score	Record
11/06/2009 (Fri)	Wayne State (exh)	Ann Arbor	W	73-54	0-0
11/14/2009 (Sat)	Northern Michigan	Ann Arbor	W	97-50	1-0
11/20/2009 (Fri)	Houston Baptist	Ann Arbor	W	77-55	2-0
Old Spice Classic					
11/26/2009 (Thu)	vs. Creighton	Orlando, FL	W	83-76 (ot)	3-0
11/27/2009 (Fri)	vs. Marquette	Orlando, FL	L	79-65	3-1
11/29/2009 (Sun)	vs. Alabama	Orlando, FL	L	68-66	3-2
ACC/Big Ten Challenge					
12/02/2009 (Wed)	Boston College	Ann Arbor	L	62-58	3-3
12/05/2009 (Sat)	Arkansas - Pine Bluff	Ann Arbor	W	67-53	4-3
12/09/2009 (Wed)	at Utah	Salt Lake City, UT	L	68-52	4-4
12/13/2009 (Sun)	Detroit - Mercy	Ann Arbor	W	75-64	5-4
12/19/2009 (Sat)	at Kansas	Lawrence, KS	L	75-64	5-5
12/22/2009 (Tue)	Coppin State	Ann Arbor	W	76-46	6-5
12/31/2010 (Thu)	at Indiana	Bloomington, IN			
01/03/2010 (Sun)	Ohio State	Ann Arbor			
01/07/2010 (Thu)	at Penn State	State College, PA			
01/10/2010 (Sun)	Northwestern	Ann Arbor			
01/14/2010 (Thu)	Indiana	Ann Arbor			
01/17/2010 (Sun)	Connecticut	Ann Arbor			
01/20/2010 (Wed)	at Wisconsin	Madison, WI			
01/23/2010 (Sat)	at Purdue	West Lafayette, IN			
01/26/2010 (Tue)	Michigan State	Ann Arbor			
01/30/2010 (Sat)	Iowa	Ann Arbor			
02/02/2010 (Tue)	at Northwestern	Evanston, IL			
02/06/2010 (Sat)	Wisconsin	Ann Arbor			
02/11/2010 (Thu)	at Minnesota	Minneapolis, MN			
02/16/2010 (Tue)	at Iowa	Iowa City, IA			
02/20/2010 (Sat)	Penn State	Ann Arbor			
02/23/2010 (Tue)	Illinois	Ann Arbor			

02/27/2010 (Sat) or 02/28/2010 (Sun)	at Ohio State	Columbus, OH			
03/02/2010 (Tue) or 03/03/2010 (Wed)	Minnesota	Ann Arbor			
03/06/2010 (Sat) or 03/07/2010 (Sun)	at Michigan State	East Lansing, MI			
Big Ten Tournament					
03/11/2010 (Thu)	First Round	Indianapolis, IN			
03/12/2010 (Fri)	Quarterfinal	Indianapolis, IN			
03/13/2010 (Sat)	Semifinal	Indianapolis, IN			
03/14/2010 (Sun)	Championship	Indianapolis, IN			

First Trimester Grades

Once again this season, I'll be handing out grades 3 times: after the main part of the non-conference schedule (now), halfway through the Big Ten schedule (after the home Iowa game on 1/30/2010), and at the end of the season. Here are the "first trimester" grades:

Player	Grade	Comments
Freshmen		
Eso Akunne	C	Eso has played more than anyone expected, and he's done pretty well out there. He's not much of an offensive threat, and he still looks a little tentative out there, but he's getting better as the season goes on.
Josh Bartelstein	Inc.	Josh has only played a few minutes in one game so far this season, so he gets an "incomplete".
Ben Cronin	C-	Ben is still recovering from his hip surgery, and he still moves awkwardly. He's still tentative out there, and he hasn't been able to jump well enough to take advantage of his height. It's anyone's guess if he'll be recovered enough to truly contribute this season.
Blake McLimans	Inc.	Blake is apparently voluntarily redshirting this season.
Jordan Morgan	Inc.	Jordan has missed the first 11 games as he recovers from knee surgery, so I expect him to redshirt this season.
Darius Morris	C+	Darius started the first 9 games of the season, and he did OK out there, but not great. He runs the floor pretty well, and he makes reasonable, but not inspired, decisions at point guard. Along with the rest of the team, his shots are not falling. He's learning and progressing, just not as quickly as we had hoped.
Corey Person	Inc.	Corey hasn't played in any games, so we haven't seen what he can do. He's on the team as a practice player.
Matt Vogrich	C	Matt had a great first game, vs. Northern Michigan, when he went 5-for-5 from 3-point range. Since then, he hasn't done much. He often looks lost out there, and his minutes have been dropping. He'll improve, with time.
Sophomores		
Stu Douglass	B-	Stu has had some good games, and some forgettable games. He recently took over the starting point guard

		position from Darius Morris, and he's played better as a starter than a bench player. We know that he's got a great 3-point shot, he just needs to get a little more consistent.
Laval Lucas-Perry	B	Laval has played pretty well so far. His 3-point shooting is the best of the "regulars", and he has done a decent job when he's taken a turn at point guard.
Zack Novak	B+	Even though Manny Harris and DeShawn Sims do most of the scoring and rebounding, Zack might just be the most valuable player on the team. He's certainly the most versatile player on the team, he hustles the whole time he's on the floor, and he plays bigger than his actual size. His shooting is off this season, but he still contributes any way he can.
Juniors		
Manny Harris	A	Manny was very good the last 2 seasons, and he has been just as good this season. He shoots well, he can drive the lane, he rebounds well, and he plays good defense. Most importantly, he's a leader on the floor.
Anthony Wright	C-	Anthony continues his slide further and further down the bench. He's got a nice 3-point shot, but he's been off lately. He needs to work on some other aspects of his game, including ballhandling, footwork, and help defense.
Seniors		
Zack Gibson	B-	Zack has done pretty well this season. He plays good, solid defense, and he's got a nice shooting touch. He needs to work on his footwork and his ballhandling a little.
DeShawn Sims	B+	DeShawn has been very inconsistent this season. When he's good, he's very good, but when he disappears, he's very disappointing. During his career, he has shown us what he is capable of, he just needs to deliver.
Coach		
John Beilein	C+	After a breakthrough season last year, Coach Beilein has shown us what his system can do. Unfortunately, his system depends heavily on good 3-point shooting, and the team has been lousy from 3-point range most of the season. He needs to adapt, and get the team into higher percentage (2-point) shots, until the 3-point shooting comes around again.

The Upcoming Week

As you can see in the schedule above, Michigan plays 2 games next week. On Thursday (12/31/2009, 12:00 noon EST, ESPN2), they play at Indiana, then on Sunday (01/03/2010, 4:30 p.m., Big Ten Network), they play Ohio State, in Crisler Arena. Drop by and cheer on the Wolverines.

Go Blue!