

Nothing But 'Net – Week #12 (01/04/2010) – New Decade, Same Old Results

The Week In Review

Happy New Year, and Happy New Decade. Yeah, I know, the new decade doesn't really start until 2011, but everyone else is referring to a new decade, so I'm joining the stampede.

It may be a new decade, but the University of Michigan men's basketball team was up to its old tricks last week: poor shooting and lackluster play on the road, and improved play at home. They played 2 games, and they lost one and won one. [On Thursday \(12/31/2009\), they lost at Indiana \(IU\) 71-65](#), then [on Sunday \(01/03/2010\), they beat \(#15\) Ohio State \(OSU\) in Crisler Arena, 73-64](#). The loss and the win leaves Michigan with a record of 7-6 (1-1 in the Big Ten).

The loss to IU was very discouraging. Michigan played a very uninspired game, and lost a game they should have won. Despite "playing from behind" for most of the game, UM managed to tie the game up (61-61) with 1:25 left. They promptly let IU go ahead by 4 (65-61) with 40 seconds left, but came back to within 2 points (67-65) with 12 seconds left. Michigan fouled, hoping Indiana would miss a few free throws, but that didn't work out.

As bad as the loss to IU was, that's how good the win over OSU was. Michigan played under control, and they played with poise. They led for most of the game, and answered every OSU run. If the Wolverines had played that well in their 6 losses, they would have won 3 or 4 of them.

Last week, there was minor bad news when [Eric Puls](#) left the team to concentrate on his studies in Engineering. This week, there was more bad news: [Ben Cronin](#) has decided to [give up on the rest of this season, and probably the rest of his basketball career](#). His hip still hasn't healed correctly from surgery almost a year ago, and he hasn't been able to run or jump very well this season, in limited action. Last season, before he took a medical redshirt year, he appeared in 2 games and scored 8 points. This season, he has played in 4 games and scored 3 points. Even though he hasn't contributed much up to this point, there have always been high hopes that he would turn into a solid center for Michigan. That dream appears to be over.

Game Statistics

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

For the 2nd game in a row, Michigan had four of the five starters scoring in double figures in the Indiana game, which is very impressive. [Zack Novak](#) was the leading scorer, with a season-high 18 points and nice shooting percentages: 5-for-10 overall, and 4-for-9 from 3-point range. [Stu Douglass](#) was right behind him, with 16 points and even better shooting percentages: 6-for-11 overall, and 4-for-6 from 3-point range. [Manny Harris](#) had 13 points, on mediocre shooting percentages, and [DeShawn Sims](#) had 12 points, also on mediocre shooting percentages. The fifth starter, [Laval Lucas-Perry](#), had 0 points, which hurt.

In the IU game, the bench was a non-factor, contributing just 6 points.

As a team, UM shot reasonably well (39.3% overall, 32.1% from 3-point range), but IU shot better (46.9% and 38.5%, respectively). The 13 Michigan turnovers also hurt.

The OSU game was more typical of the way UM has scored this season: Sims and Harris combined to score 52 of Michigan's 73 points. Sims had 28, Harris had 24, and they both shot very good percentages. None of the other players scored in double figures.

The bench contributed a little more in the OSU game, chipping in 9 points.

The Big Picture

Up until this week, at least Michigan had won all their "should win" games, but that fell apart when they lost to Indiana. The OSU game was a "toss up" game, the first that they've won this season.

At this point, Michigan is in big trouble as far as making it back to the NCAA Tournament. They need to win 13 or 14 Big Ten games (out of 18), and they've already lost one, with very difficult games left to play (twice each against Wisconsin, Purdue, and Michigan State). It's easy to see 6 losses right there. However, all is not lost: if UM plays like they did against Ohio State for the rest of the season, they stand a chance of winning 13 games, but they can't afford any letdown.

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
<i>Old Spice Classic</i>					
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
<i>ACC/Big Ten Challenge</i>					
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	L	71-65	6-6 (0-1)
01/03/2010 (Sun)	Ohio State	Ann Arbor	W	73-64	7-6 (1-1)
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			

See my [Big Ten Report](#) for a complete rundown of the Big Ten last week.

The Upcoming Week

As you can see in the schedule above, Michigan plays 2 games next week. On Thursday (01/07/2010, 7:00 p.m., ESPN2), they play at Penn State, then on Sunday (01/10/2010, 2:30 p.m., Big Ten Network), they play Northwestern in Crisler Arena. Drop by and cheer on the Wolverines.

Go Blue!