

Nothing But 'Net – Week #13 (01/11/2010) – A Tale Of Two Halves, Twice

The Week In Review

The University of Michigan men's basketball team played 2 games last week, and they won one and lost one. [On Thursday \(01/07/2010\), they won at Penn State \(PSU\) 64-55](#), then [on Sunday \(01/10/2010\), they lost to Northwestern in Crisler Arena, 68-62](#). The win and the loss leave Michigan with a record of 8-7 (2-2 in the Big Ten).

In both games, Michigan played one terrible half and one good/great half of basketball. In the Penn State game, UM played a terrible 1st half, maybe the worst half of basketball they've played in the 36 years I've been watching them. Fortunately, they played a great 2nd half, and won the game. In the Northwestern game, they played a good (but not great) 1st half, but it wasn't nearly good enough to make up for a terrible 2nd half.

Coming on the heels of [Michigan's big win against Ohio State last Sunday \(01/03/2010\)](#), the road win against Penn State was very encouraging. Could the Wolverines finally have turned the corner? Did they finally have their act together? Nope. They look horrible in the 2nd half against Northwestern. They were tentative and disorganized, and they made way too many silly mental errors. This wasn't even a matter of bad shooting, they were just outplayed and out hustled. Northwestern wanted it more. This was one of the most embarrassing losses in Michigan basketball history, certainly in the Bottom Ten.

It's a real shame, because Michigan almost pulled the win out. With 1:28 left in the game, they actually led, 62-61. They didn't score again, and Northwestern hit 7 of 9 free throws to seal the win.

It's an even bigger shame because the loss pretty much negates the impressive 2nd half rally that Michigan pulled off at Penn State. If Michigan had managed to win the Northwestern game, they would have been tied for 3rd in the Big Ten, just one game out of 1st place. Now, they're in 6th place, 2 games out.

After several weeks with no changes to the roster, there has been lots of news in the last 3 weeks: 2 weeks ago, it was [Eric Puls leaving the team to concentrate on his studies](#). Last week, it was [Ben Cronin leaving the team, possibly forever, due to his hip not healing](#). This week, there is more bad news, and some good news. In the bad news category, [Eso Akunne has been declared academically ineligible for the rest of the season](#). This is much more significant than Puls leaving, but not as bad as Cronin leaving. At least Eso can return next season. He had been making significant contributions in the last few weeks, and he will be missed. On the good news side, [freshman forward Jordan Dumars \(son of former Detroit Piston player and current Piston president Joe Dumars\) has transferred to Michigan](#) from the University of South Florida, and will practice with the team until he is eligible to play in Winter term 2011.

Game Statistics

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

[Manny Harris](#) and [DeShawn Sims](#). Again.

Harris and Sims both scored in double figures in both games. In the PSU game, Sims was the leader, with 25 points, while Harris chipped in 13 points. Against Northwestern, it was Harris' turn, with 24, and 17 for Sims. The only other player to hit double figures this week

was [Laval Lucas-Perry](#), with 16 against Penn State. The other 2 starters, [Zack Novak](#) and [Stu Douglass](#), contributed a few points (8 and 2 vs. PSU and 7 and 6 vs. Northwestern), but they weren't as effective as they can be.

The bench didn't help much at all, with 0 points vs. PSU, and 8 points vs. Northwestern. Michigan needs much more bench scoring, consistently, to succeed.

The Big Picture

The season isn't over, but it's on life support. If Michigan can't beat a weak team like Northwestern in Crisler Arena, they're not going to stand a chance against the four Top-25 teams they play in a row, starting next Sunday.

At this point, Michigan stands very little chance of making it back to the NCAA Tournament. They need to win 13 or 14 Big Ten games (out of 18), and now they've lost two. They still stand a decent chance of making it to the NIT, but they need to win nine Big Ten games, and they've already wasted two of their better chances.

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	W	64-55	8-6 (2-1)
01/10/2010 (Sun)	Northwestern	Ann Arbor	L	68-62	8-7 (2-2)
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)	at Ohio State	Columbus, OH			

or 02/28/2010 (Sun)					
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 (01/14/2010, 9:00 p.m., ESPN), they play Indiana, then on Sunday (01/17/2010, 1:30 p.m., CBS), they play Connecticut. Both games are in Crisler Arena. Drop by and cheer on the Wolverines.

Go Blue!