

Nothing But 'Net – Week #04 – 11/22/2010 – Undefeated ... And Untested

Wow! The UM men's basketball team is undefeated (3-0)! Stop the presses (er, stop the Internet?! This is big news, right?)

Nope, this is not a big deal. Michigan hasn't played a decent opponent yet. So far, they have beaten [Saginaw Valley State \(exhibition\)](#), [South Carolina Upstate](#), [Bowling Green](#), and [Gardner-Webb](#). Not exactly Top-25 teams. True, they have been improving each game, but they haven't really been challenged yet.

So, last week they played 2 games in something called the [2010 Legends Classic](#). On Thursday they beat Bowling Green (69-50), then on Sunday they beat Gardner-Webb (80-58). Both games were in a mostly-empty Crisler Arena. Both games were kind of boring, and both games followed the same basic pattern: close at first, then Michigan slowly pulled away. Once they opened up a double-digit lead in both games, they never looked back. Bowling Green hung on a little longer than Gardner-Webb did, and they even got close to taking the lead near the end of the first half. The Wolverines had built a respectable (27-20) lead with 6:24 left in the half, then BG went on a 7-1 run to get within one, 28-27, with 3:06 left. A Bowling Green player stole the ball, and went downcourt for what looked to be an easy layup that would put them ahead. [Zack Novak](#) went after him, and managed to block the layup cleanly. [Evan Smotrycz](#) picked up the loose ball, and fed [Matt Vogrich](#) for a 3-pointer that started an 11-4 Michigan run to end the half. It was a great "hustle" play by Novak, and it really sparked the team. Just for good measure, Novak did it again with 2:44 left in the game. Of course, by that time the game was all wrapped up for Michigan, but that didn't stop Novak from playing like the game was on the line. That's upperclass leadership.

Michigan shot well in both games, especially against Bowling Green. They won the rebounding battle in both games, and they had more assists than turnovers in both games. Those are all encouraging signs. Unlike last season, which was the "Manny and DeShawn Show", Michigan has much better scoring balance, including big games from several newcomers:

- Smotrycz and [Jordan Morgan](#) were the top two scorers for UM in the Bowling Green game, with 14 and 12 points respectively.
- Morgan had a monster game vs. Gardner-Webb: 20 points (on 9-for-11 shooting).
- [Tim Hardaway, Jr.](#) also scored in double figures in the GWU game, with 15 points. He almost hit double figures in the BGSU game, with 9 points, but he sat for the last 18 minutes of the first half with 2 quick fouls.
- [Darius Morris](#) is almost a newcomer. He was the leading scorer in the GWU game, with 21 points (on 8-for-10 shooting).
- The only upperclassman to score in double figures this week was [Stu Douglass](#), with 10 points in the GWU game.

A couple players struggled at times this week:

- Novak went 0-for-4 in the GWU game. He did have 6 rebounds, however.
- Vogrich went 0-for-3 in the GWU game. He didn't look very comfortable out there. Same stats for [Colton Christian](#), although he did look pretty comfortable out there, and had 6 rebounds.
- The other two "young bigs" ([Blake McLimans](#) and [Jon Horford](#)) didn't do much when they got some minutes. McLimans appears to be more comfortable out on the wing than underneath, and Horford looks a little lost out there. I'm hoping they'll improve as the season goes on.

Here are the full stats for the [Bowling Green](#) and [Gardner-Webb](#) games.

One more thing: the officials in the Bowling Green game were a joke. They called way too many fouls (39), on both teams, and they ruined the flow of the game. They didn't affect the final outcome, but they made an otherwise boring game unwatchable.

After playing 4 overmatched opponents at home, Michigan suddenly has to go on the road and play a Top-25 team: #10 [Syracuse](#) in the championship rounds of the Legends Classic, in Atlantic City, NJ. They play Syracuse on Friday (11/26/2010, 8:00 p.m.), then they play either [Georgia Tech](#) or [UTEP](#) on Saturday (either 5:30 p.m. or 8:00 p.m.). I expect Syracuse and their 7-foot freshman center ([Fab Melo](#)) to crush Michigan, but the game on Saturday could be competitive.

Go Blue!