

Nothing But 'Net – Week #09 – 12/27/2010 – Ready Or Not, Here Comes The Big Ten

Michigan's done with their non-conference schedule, except for the Kansas game, which is on 01/09/2011, 3 games into the Big Ten schedule. They played their (almost) last non-conference game on [Thursday evening in Crisler Arena, and they beat Bryant, 87-71](#). It was a high-scoring affair, with lots of 3-pointers by both teams. Michigan shot 16-for-32 from 3-point land, and Bryant shot 13-for-25. That's good shooting. The 16 made 3-pointers ties the Michigan record. Despite all the offensive firepower, it was kind of a boring game. The score was close early, but UM slowly built a lead, and kept adding to it the rest of the game.

Individually, the big star was [Darius Morris](#), again. He is easily the most improved player on Michigan's team, and one of the most improved players in the Big Ten, and nationally. He had another double-double, with a career-high 26 points and 12 assists. He also had 6 rebounds and 0 turnovers. That's a great scoring line.

Since Michigan scored 87 points (a season-high), it's not surprising that a couple other UM players hit double figures. [Tim Hardaway, Jr.](#) had 20 points, and [Evan Smotrycz](#) had 14 points. Morris and Smotrycz both hit 4-for-6 shooting 3-pointers, and Hardaway hit 4-for-8. Very nice.

Complete stats for the Bryant game are [here](#).

The win raises Michigan's record to 10-2, which is very good. It also extends Michigan's winning streak to 7 games, which is also very good.

The Nothing But 'Net Expectation-O-Meter (NBNEOM) remains set at "Exceeds Expectations".

1st Trimester Grades

Since Michigan is a little past a third of the way through their schedule, now is a fine time to hand out 1st trimester grades. The 2nd trimester grades will be handed out midway through the Big Ten schedule (after the home Iowa game on 01/30/2011). Here are the grades:

True Freshmen

[Colton Christian](#): C+

Colton hasn't played much (11 games, 81 minutes), and he hasn't scored much (2 points on 1-for-9 shooting). He has gotten some rebounds (26), and he's played some good defense. He's still looking for his place on the team.

[Tim Hardaway, Jr.](#): B+

Tim is the 2nd leading scorer on the team (11.8 pts/game). His shooting numbers are good (37.5% and 29.4%), he's gotten some rebounds (44), and he has more assists (17) than turnovers (13). He's had a couple sub-par games (UTEP and Harvard), but other than that, he's been pretty consistent.

[Jon Horford](#): B

Jon started off slow, but he's been getting better every game in December. He looks much more comfortable out there now. His scoring (3.4 pts/game) isn't very exciting, but his shooting percentage (54.2%) is excellent. He's developed into a fine backup at center.

[Evan Smotrycz](#): B+

Evan has been a little inconsistent out there, with some good games (Bowling Green, Clemson, and Bryant) and some bad games (Harvard, Concordia, and Utah). His shooting percentages (40.8% and 37.2%) are good, but his rebounding total (31) is kind of low for a player his size.

Redshirt Freshmen

[Blake McLimans](#): C+

Blake has tons of potential, and he shows flashes of promise, but he has yet to really deliver. It was a big relief when he finally hit his first (and only) 3-pointer, after missing his first 13 attempts.

[Jordan Morgan](#): A-

Jordan has been a very pleasant surprise this season. Even though he isn't as tall as many of the centers he's been asked to guard, he has used his strength and quickness to keep them in check. He has also done very well offensively. He's the 3rd leading scorer on the team (9.6 pts/game), and he has a great shooting percentage (58.5%).

Transfer Player (Sophomore)

[Jordan Dumars](#): Incomplete.

Jordan hasn't played yet. Even though he was eligible starting with the Bryant game, he didn't play. He is still recovering from a minor knee injury he suffered earlier this season. He should see some playing time once the Big Ten season starts.

Sophomores

[Eso Akunne](#): C

Eso hasn't played much (8 games, 26 minutes), and he hasn't scored much (5 points).

[Josh Bartelstein](#): Incomplete

Josh has only played in "mop up" action so far (6 games, 12 minutes), and he hasn't scored yet. He does write a very interesting and informative blog on MgoBlue.com.

[Darius Morris](#): A

Darius gets the only straight A, and he sure has earned it. He's the leading scorer (15.8 pts/game), the leader in assists (90), and the leader in steals (20). He's shooting good percentages (53.3% and 37%), and he's even pulled down 44 rebounds. He runs the offense well, has good court vision, and is excellent at bringing the ball upcourt against heavy pressure. He's the fastest player on the team, and he has amazing body control.

[Corey Person](#): Incomplete

Corey is another player who has only played in "garbage time" so far (4 games, 8 minutes). He has scored 1 point.

[Matt Vogrich](#): C+

Matt has come off the bench in every game so far, and he's done OK, but not great. He hasn't hit double figures yet, and he's had a few scoreless games, but he's shooting pretty well (40.9% and 35.5%) and getting a few rebounds (19). He needs to make more of the minutes he's been getting.

Juniors

[Stu Douglass](#): B+

Stu has adjusted well to his new role as "6th man". He's the 4th leading scorer (8.1 pts/game) on the team, even though he hasn't started a game this season. He has very good shooting percentages (45.1% and 43.1%), and he has done a pretty good job running the point when he's been in. He has been a leader out there.

[Zack Novak](#): A-

Zack is only the 5th leading scorer (7.9 pts/game) on the team, but he is the leading rebounder (90). That's amazing when you consider that he is really a shooting guard who is occasionally asked to play small forward. He routinely guards players 4-6 inches taller than he is, and he shuts them down. But the one thing about Zack that doesn't necessarily show up on the stat sheet is his hustle. He never stops hustling out there, and he never gives up. He scraps and dives for loose balls, he chases down opposing players on breakaways, and he sets brutal picks. He is a fierce competitor, and a true leader.

[Darrick Ervin II](#): Incomplete.

Darrick is another "mop up time" player (3 games, 3 minutes). He hasn't taken a shot yet.

Big Ten Report

It's time to check in on our Big Ten brethren. [See my weekly Big Ten Report, starting now.](#)

Next Week

The Big Ten schedule starts this week, and the Wolverines have two games, both at home: Tuesday (12/28, 2:00) vs. (#13) [Purdue](#), and Sunday (01/02, 4:00) vs. [Penn State](#). Check out the date/time of that Purdue game: 2:00 in the afternoon on a weekday. Sure, a lot of people will be off work during the week between Christmas and New Year's, but not everyone. And, of course, most of the students (including the [Maize Rage](#)) are home for the holidays. So, it could be a small, inexperienced crowd for a crucial matchup against one of the better teams in the Big Ten. Sigh.

It would be great if Michigan could win both games, but I'm afraid that Purdue might be a little too much for them, at least at this point in the season. The way this young team is growing up, they might be able to knock off some of the ranked teams by the end of the season. They should be able to handle Penn State, as long as they play the way they've been playing lately.

Go Blue!