

Nothing But 'Net – Week #10 – 01/03/2011 – One Out Of Two Ain't Good

Happy New Year (unless you watched The Gator Bowl).

The Michigan men's basketball team played two games this week, and they lost one and won one. [On Tuesday \(12/28/2010\), they played their Big Ten opener in Crisler Arena against \(#12\) Purdue, and they got flattened 80-57.](#) Then, [on Sunday \(01/02/2011\), they played Penn State in Crisler, and they won 76-69.](#) The loss and the win leave Michigan with an overall record of 11-3, 1-1 in Big Ten play. The loss snapped UM's winning streak at 7 games, and also snapped their home-court winning streak at 9 games.

Even though Purdue was ranked #12, Michigan should have been able to stay with them a lot better, and maybe even sneak out an upset victory. Instead, once Purdue opened up a double-digit lead, the Wolverines lost their composure, and lost all control of the game. This Michigan team isn't going to overpower a Top-25 team, they need to control the tempo and finesse their way past the big boys. Once they lost control of the game, it turned into target practice for Purdue. It was not pretty.

The Penn State game wasn't much better. Sure, Michigan won, but they struggled for most of the game against a PSU team that will almost certainly finish 10th or 11th in the Big Ten this year. UM played hard in the last 3:00 to win the game, but the first 37 minutes were embarrassing.

I love to talk stats, but you don't want to see [the stats from the Purdue game](#), and I don't want to even think about them. So, let's talk about [the PSU stats](#). There was some good news: UM shot very well overall (57.4%), they shot 3-pointers very well (40%), and they shot free throws really well (14-for-14). On the other hand, they got out-rebounded (26-24), and they had more turnovers (10-6) than PSU. Those 8 extra possessions meant that PSU took 7 more shots than UM, but fortunately, they hit 2 less.

Individually, Michigan only had one player ([Stu Douglass](#)) in double figures (15 points) against Purdue, and he didn't hit double figures (6 points) against PSU, so no had double figures in both games last week. [Darius Morris](#) had a good game against PSU (20 points and 10 assists = double-double), but he had a lousy game (9 points, on 3-for-14 shooting) against Purdue. So far, Morris has had 3 bad games, and UM has lost all 3 of them. UM had 4 players in double figures vs. PSU: Morris, [Zack Novak](#) (15 points), [Evan Smotrycz](#) (11 points), and [Jordan Morgan](#) (10 points). The remaining starter, [Tim Hardaway, Jr.](#), had a lousy game: 2 points on 1-for-4 shooting.

The Nothing But 'Net Expectation-O-Meter (NBNEOM) needs to be reset back to "Meets Expectations". Although UM looked terrible vs. Purdue, it's still only one loss, and it isn't much of a surprise. And even though UM looked pretty bad for most of the game vs. PSU, it was still a win. That's "meeting expectations", but just barely. Sure, the wins and losses are what count, and this is still a young and unpredictable team, but losing a game like the Purdue game can have effects on the rest of the season. There are plenty of tough games coming up (the upcoming week, for example), and it will be very tempting for a young team like Michigan to remember how they fell apart in the Purdue game and give up again. I sure hope it doesn't happen that way, but it's a real concern.

Speaking of tough games, the upcoming week has two of the toughest. On Wednesday (01/05, 8:30 EST), Michigan plays at (#24) [Wisconsin](#), then on Sunday (01/09, 4:30), they play at home vs. (#3) [Kansas](#). I don't know which game is going to be tougher. On the one hand, Kansas is undefeated (11-0) and ranked much higher, but on the other hand, Wisconsin (10-2) wins 95% of their home games, and Michigan hasn't won there since [John Beilein](#) was in high school. Beating either of them would be a major upset; losing big to either of them would be understandable, but depressing. I'm just hoping that UM can hang in there against both of them, even if they ultimately end up losing both games.

Go Blue!