

Nothing But 'Net – Week #10 – 01/02/2012 – A Promising Start

Happy New Year!

The (#18) University of Michigan men's basketball team played two games last week, and they won both of them, to improve their record to 12-2 (2-0 in the Big Ten) on the season, including 7 wins in a row. [On Thursday \(12/29/2011\) they beat Penn State 71-53](#), then [on Sunday \(01/01/2012\) they beat Minnesota 61-56](#). Both games were in Crisler Arena. This is a very promising start to the Big Ten schedule.

The Penn State win was easy and convincing, but Minnesota put up quite a fight. PSU really only has one good player (Tim Frazier), and he got his points, but the rest of the team is pretty weak. After PSU took an early 5-4 lead, UM went on a quick 7-0 run to go ahead 11-5, and they never trailed again. The lead got as large as 16 points in the 1st half, and 22 points in the 2nd half, before PSU got a little closer (18 points) at the end. It was an easy win. Not so in the Minnesota game. At the first media timeout, Minnesota was up 6-1. That's one point in 4+ minutes of "action" for Michigan. Not good. Michigan tied the score at 6-6, then again at 11-11, before they finally got their first lead, 13-11, with 9:16 left in the 1st half. Once again, Michigan never trailed again, although Minnesota did tie the game at 35-35 in the 2nd half, and get within one point (57-56) with 2:08 left in the game. Michigan made some clutch shots and grabbed some crucial rebounds, and managed to hang on for the win. It was very exciting.

The stats tell the story for both games. In the [PSU game](#), UM shot pretty well overall (25-for-53 = 47.2%), shot fairly well (8-for-25 = 32.0%) from 3-point range, and shot very well (13-for-15 = 86.7%) from the free-throw line. They tied in the rebounding battle (32-32), and only had 9 turnovers. Contrast that to the [Minnesota game](#), where Michigan didn't shoot very well overall (20-for-52 = 38.5%), didn't shoot very well from 3-point range (6-for-20 = 30.0%), and shot very poorly from the free-throw line (15-for-23 = 65.2%). Michigan did win the rebounding battle decisively (36-28), and they had a decent number of turnovers (10), but the free-throw shooting almost cost them the game.

Individually, only one Michigan player hit double figures in both games: [Trey Burke](#). He had 13 points in the Penn State game, which was good, but he carried Michigan on his back to the Minnesota win with a new career-high 27 points. No other UM player hit double figures in the Minnesota game. Burke was brilliant. Two of the other starters ([Tim Hardaway Jr.](#) and [Evan Smotrycz](#)) hit double figures in the PSU game, with 26 points and 10 points, respectively. THJ played a great game vs. PSU, and scored with an impressive variety of moves and shots, including an awesome fake dunk that got the defender off his feet so that Tim could blow past him for the underhand scoop lay-in. It was a magic moment. The other two starters ([Zack Novak](#) and [Jordan Morgan](#)) didn't have a great week scoring, but they each contributed in other ways. Morgan had a really mixed up game vs. Minnesota, with 7 points and 12 rebounds, but 5 awful turnovers, all at key points in the game.

The bench kicked in 13 points ([Stu Douglass](#) – 7, [Matt Vogrich](#) – 6) in the PSU game, and 9 points (all by Douglass) in the Minnesota game. UM didn't need the points in the PSU game, but those 9 points by Douglass in the Minnesota game were crucial.

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

Michigan plays two more Big Ten games this week. On Thursday (01/05/2012, 9:00 p.m., ESPN2), Michigan plays at Indiana, then on Sunday (01/08/2012, 1:30 p.m., CBS), they play Wisconsin, in Crisler Arena. These are going to be two tough games. Both Indiana (#13) and Wisconsin (#11) are ranked, and Michigan has always had a tough time playing in Assembly Hall. Check back next week to see what happened, and why.

Go Blue!