

Nothing But 'Net – Week #14 – 01/30/2012 – A Split On The Road, And Second Trimester Grades

The (#22) University of Michigan men's basketball team played two games on the road last week, and they won one and lost one. [On Tuesday \(01/24/2012\) they beat Purdue 66-64](#), then [on Sunday \(01/29/2012\) they lost at Ohio State 64-49](#). This brings Michigan's record to 16-6 (6-3 in the Big Ten).

This was a good news/bad news kind of week. The good news (obviously) was that UM finally won a true road game (not to be confused with the 4 "neutral site" games). The bad news was that they got overpowered in the OSU game. Actually, Michigan hung around pretty well in the loss to OSU, but they faded in the last 6 minutes. They pulled to within 7 points (50-43) with 5:44 left, but OSU finished with a 14-6 run. UM didn't get embarrassed, but they didn't get the win either.

The win at Purdue was pretty impressive. UM led for most of the game, but Purdue pulled into the lead (48-47) with 9:08 left. From that point on, the lead changed hands 7 times, and never got bigger than 4 points. It was a close, exciting finish, and Michigan deserved to win the game.

Let's look at the stats. In the [Purdue](#) game, Michigan shot pretty well overall (27-for-50 = 54.0%), shot very well from 3-point range (6-for-14 = 42.9%), and shot just OK from the free-throw line (6-for-9 = 66.7%). They won the rebounding battle handily (30-23), but they had more turnovers than Purdue (12-9). Those are good enough numbers to win on the road. The stats from the [OSU](#) game are not as impressive. UM didn't shoot very well overall (19-for-53 = 35.8%), they didn't shoot very well from 3-point range (8-for-25 = 32.0%), and they didn't shoot enough from the free-throw line (3-for-4 = 75.0%). Since OSU went 15-for-18 (83.3%) from the free-throw line, free throws almost completely account for the final margin of victory.

Individually, only one Michigan player hit double figures in both games this week: [Tim Hardaway Jr.](#) (19 vs. Purdue, 15 vs. OSU). Three other players hit double figures in one game: [Trey Burke](#) (6 and 13), [Jordan Morgan](#) (12 and 8), and [Stu Douglass](#) (12 and 7). The fifth starter, [Zack Novak](#), had a rough week, with 5 points vs. Purdue and 0 points vs. OSU.

The bench chipped in 12 points ([Matt Vogrich](#) – 2, [Evan Smotrycz](#) – 10) in the Purdue game, but only 6 points ([Blake McLimans](#) – 3, Smotrycz – 3) in the OSU game. I keep saying it every week: Michigan needs more bench scoring.

The Nothing But 'Net Expectation-O-Meter (NBNEOM) continues to point to "Meets Expectations". Getting that first road win was big, and losing to OSU on the road wasn't too surprising.

Michigan plays two games this week, one at home and one on the road. On Wednesday (02/01/2012, 6:30 p.m., Big Ten Network), Michigan plays Indiana in Crisler Arena, then on Sunday (02/05/2012, 1:00 p.m., CBS), they play at Michigan State. These are two very tough games. Michigan barely lost to Indiana (73-71) earlier this season in Bloomington, and Michigan barely beat MSU (60-59) in Crisler Arena a couple weeks ago.

The University of Michigan men's basketball team is now halfway through their Big Ten schedule, so it's time for their "second trimester" grades. You'll remember that [the first trimester ended after the non-conference portion of the schedule](#).

At this point, UM's record is 6-3 in the Big Ten, good for a tie for 3rd place. See my weekly [Big Ten Report](#) for more details. 6-3 is a good record, and if Michigan could match that record in the 2nd half of the Big Ten season, they would certainly finish near the top. However, UM had an easier schedule in the first half of the Big Ten season than they have in the second half. In the first half, they played 5 games at home, and 4 on the road. They won all 5 home games, but 3 of those games were against teams in the lower half of the Big Ten standings (Penn State, Minnesota, and Northwestern), and only 2 of them were against "contenders" (Wisconsin and Michigan State). They didn't do very well on the road in the first half, going 1-3. Their one road victory (Purdue) was pretty impressive, and they hung in there against Indiana, but they lost big to Ohio State (understandable) and Iowa (not very impressive). The second half of their Big Ten schedule is much harder, with only 4 home games, all against "contenders" (Indiana, Illinois, Ohio State, and Purdue), and 5 road games. All road games are tough, but 2 of the road games Michigan has scheduled are tougher: at Michigan State, and at Illinois. Looking at the second half of Michigan's Big Ten schedule, they'll be doing well to go 4-5, beating Illinois and Purdue at home, and Nebraska and Penn State on the road. Maybe they'll be able to beat Northwestern on the road.

Anyway, it's time to look at the second trimester grades:

Freshmen

[Max Bielfeldt](#): Incomplete (1st trimester: Incomplete)

Unless there's a catastrophe, Max is going to be redshirted this season.

[Carlton Brundidge](#): C (1st trimester: C)

Carlton hasn't played much (3.4 minutes/game), and his minutes have been decreasing lately. When he's been in, he's played pretty well, for a freshman. He just needs more game experience.

[Trey Burke](#): A (1st trimester: A)

Trey has done everything that we hoped he would, and much more. He has had a few (very few!) sub-par games, and he occasionally tries to do too much, but in general he has been the most talented player on the floor in most of the games, regardless of class level. He continues to lead the team in minutes played, he's the 2nd leading scorer, and he's the team leader in assists (4.9/game). When he's on the floor, Michigan just plays better.

[Sai Tummala](#): Incomplete (1st trimester: Incomplete)

Unless there's a catastrophe, Sai is going to be redshirted this season.

Sophomores

[Colton Christian](#): C- (1st trimester: C)

Colton hasn't played much (11 games, 32 minutes), and he hasn't scored much (4 points on 2-for-8 shooting). He's still looking for his place on the team. He's too short to be a "big", and not a good enough ballhandler and shooter to be a guard.

[Tim Hardaway, Jr.](#): A- (1st trimester: A)

Tim started the season with a bang, and he's still the leading scorer on the team (15.2 points/game), but he's leveled off a little since Big Ten play started. He tends to disappear for large chunks of the game (entire 1st halves), and his shooting percentages have sagged a little, but he's still an important player.

[Jon Horford](#): Incomplete (1st trimester: B-)

Jon showed great improvement over last season, and was looking more comfortable out there, then he hurt his foot. He has missed the last 13 games, and it looks like he might be redshirted.

[Blake McLimans](#): C+ (1st trimester: C+)

With Horford out, McLimans has been getting more minutes earlier in the game, but he hasn't been doing much with them. He's averaging 1.1 points/game, and shooting a nice percentage (52.9%), but he gets surprisingly few rebounds (19, in 20 games), and looks a little lost out there sometimes.

[Jordan Morgan](#): B+ (1st trimester: B+)

To date, Jordan hasn't been as effective as he was last season. He shows flashes of his old self, then disappears again. Still, he's averaging 7.6 points/game, shooting 64.7% from the floor, and grabbing 5.6 rebounds/game.

[Evan Smotrycz](#): B (1st trimester: A)

Evan had a string of 4 games where he was on fire (Oakland – 20 points, Arkansas-Pine Bluff – 16 points, Alabama A&M – 17 points, Bradley – 20 points). Since then, he has cooled off considerably, hitting double figures only 2 times in the last 10 games (Penn State - 10 points, Purdue - 10 points). He's had some sub-par games mixed in (Minnesota - 2 points, Wisconsin - 3 points, Iowa - 0 points, Arkansas - 4 points, Ohio State - 3 points). His shooting numbers are still good (46.0% overall, 42.6% from 3-point range), but they're down considerably from the 1st trimester. Same with his rebounding numbers (5.5/game). He's in a slump, and it cost him his starting role.

Juniors

[Eso Akunne](#): C (1st trimester: C)

Eso hasn't played much (12 games, 48 minutes), and he hasn't scored much (20 points), but he has been shooting well (7-for-8 = 87.5% overall, 4-for-5 = 80.0% from 3-point range). Unfortunately, he broke a bone in his foot, and he's out until tournament time.

[Josh Bartelstein](#): Incomplete (1st trimester: Incomplete)

Josh has only played in "mop up" action so far (6 games, 8 minutes), and he hasn't scored yet. He does write a very interesting and informative blog on MGoBlue.com.

[Corey Person](#): Incomplete (1st trimester: Incomplete)

Corey is another player who has only played in "garbage time" so far (5 games, 5 minutes). He hasn't scored yet.

[Matt Vogrich](#): C (1st trimester: C)

Matt has come off the bench in every game so far, and he's done OK, but not great. He hit double figures once (Arkansas-Pine Bluff), but he's also had a few scoreless games. He's shooting pretty well overall (34.0%), but he still hasn't found his 3-point shot this season (7-for-31 = 22.6%). He needs to make more of the minutes he's been getting.

Seniors

[Stu Douglass](#): B (1st trimester: B)

Stu was the "6th man", but he's replaced Smotrycz in the starting lineup for the last 4 games. He's scoring 7.6 pts/game, which is pretty good, and his shooting percentages are decent (40.4% and 33.0%). He's done a pretty good job running the point when he's been in, and he helps settle things down when the team gets a little crazy.

[Zack Novak](#): A- (1st trimester: A-)

After getting to play his natural position (shooting guard) in the "preseason", Zack has had to move back to playing "over his head" at small forward in several Big Ten games. Once again, he's had to play out of position, guarding players 4-6 inches taller and 30-50 pounds heavier, and he's held his own. As a result, his stats are down slightly from the 1st trimester. However, as I've said before, there's a lot more to Zack than his stats. The one thing 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.

As you can see, no one's grades went up, but most of them didn't go down either. Evan Smotrycz had the only big drop.

Check back next week to see what happened, and why.

Go Blue!