

Nothing But 'Net – Week #03 – 11/12/2012 – A Couple Of Cupcakes

The (#5) University of Michigan men's basketball team played two games this week. They played their second (of two) exhibition games, then they played their first "real" game. [On Monday \(11/05/2012\) evening, UM beat Saginaw Valley State 76-48](#) in an exhibition game, then [on Friday \(11/09/2012\), they beat Slippery Rock 100-62](#). Both games were in Crisler Arena. The win in their first regular season game gives UM a record of 1-0.

Both games were against "cupcakes", and Michigan took care of business and beat two teams that they should beat easily. SVSU was only a little bit better than Northern Michigan, with some good 3-point shooters, but they were no match for Michigan. Even though Slippery Rock is a Division II school, they were pretty talented and dangerous. They played UM even for the first 9 minutes, trailing by only 3 points (20-17), before UM started pulling away. Once Michigan opened a decent lead, they never looked back, extending the lead to as many as 42 points.

So, what can we learn from 2 blowouts against overmatched opponents? We can see which combinations of players seem to play the best together, we can look for individual improvements from last season, and we can get a good first look at the freshmen. So far, everything looks good, but we'll learn a lot more when the level of competition gets cranked up.

You want stats? I've got stats. As a team, Michigan shot very well overall in both games, especially from 3-point range. In the [SVSU](#) game, UM shot 56.9% (29-for-51) overall, and 40.7% (11-for-27) from distance. They did even better in the [Slippery Rock](#) game: 57.6% (38-for-66) overall, and 63.2% (12-for-19) from 3-point range. 63.2% is the highest percentage I can ever remember seeing by either Michigan or an opponent. Let's just ignore free-throw shooting, OK? It was miserable: 50.0% (7-for-14) vs. SVSU, and 63.2% (12-for-19) vs. Slippery Rock. Yeah, UM hit the same percentage from 3-point range as they did from the free-throw line. Ugh.

Individually, only 2 players hit double figures in both games: [Trey Burke](#) (16 and 21 points) and [Glenn Robinson III](#) (17 and 10). [Tim Hardaway Jr.](#) had a monster game (25 points and 10 rebounds, for a double-double) vs. Slippery Rock, but he only had 5 points in the SVSU game. The other 2 starters ([Jordan Morgan](#) and [Matt Vogrich](#)) chipped in some points: Morgan had 7 and 4, and Vogrich had 8 in both games.

Since both games were blowouts, [Coach Beilein](#) got to clear his bench, and everyone got to play. Actually, 2 players only played in one of the games each. After missing both exhibition games with a minor knee injury, [Jon Horford](#) saw his first action of the season in the Slippery Rock game, and he looked good. He had 4 points in only 8 minutes of action, but he also had an assist, a blocked shot, and a rebound. The other player who only played in one game was [Caris LeVert](#). He played 12 minutes in the SVSU game, but didn't score. He didn't play in the Slippery Rock game, because he is probably going to be redshirted this season. Given the depth on this season's team, he probably wouldn't have gotten to play very much, so a redshirt season is a good idea.

Even though Coach Beilein got to play everyone, it is pretty obvious which bench players are going to be part of the regular rotation, and which ones are only going to play in "garbage time". The first 2 players off the bench in all 3 games have been [Nik Stauskas](#) and [Mitch McGary](#), with [Spike Albrecht](#) spelling Trey Burke. It also looks like Jon Horford and [Blake McLimans](#) will be part of the regular mix. That's 10 deep, which is a little more bench support than Beilein is used to using. That leaves 4 "garbage time" players: [Max Bielfeldt](#), [Josh Bartelstein](#), [Eso Akunne](#), and [Corey Person](#). So, how did these guys do this week? Not bad, overall. For the "mainstream" subs, Stauskas had 8 and 7 points, McGary had 6 and 9, Albrecht had 2 and 2, Horford had 4 points (he didn't play in the SVSU game), and McLimans had 3 and 3. For the "garbage time" subs, Bielfeldt had 0 and 2 (but his tip-in got UM to 100), Bartelstein had 0 and 0, Akunne had 2 and 5, and Person had 2 and 0. In total, UM got 23 bench points vs. SVSU and 32 bench points vs. Slippery Rock, which is very encouraging.

This Week

Michigan has two games this week, both at home. On Monday (11/12/2012, 9:00 p.m., ESPNU), Michigan plays their first round game in the [NIT Season Tip-Off](#) tournament, against IUPUI (Indiana University – Purdue University – Indianapolis), then on Tuesday (11/13/2012, 8:00 p.m., ESPN2), they play the second round game, against either the winner or the loser of the game (in Crisler) on Monday night between Cleveland State and Bowling Green. As I mentioned in my [Season Preview](#), the NIT Season Tip-Off is different from most (all?) other preseason “destination” tournaments since the “host” teams aren’t guaranteed a spot in the championship game. The winner of each of the 4 “regionals” goes on to New York City during Thanksgiving week. So, UM needs to win both games this week to advance.

Come on down to the newly renovated Crisler Arena to check out this season’s edition of Michigan Basketball, and stop by sections 209/210 to say hi to the friendly usher.

Go Blue!