

Nothing But 'Net – Week #15 – 02/04/2013 – Fun While It Lasted

The (#1) University of Michigan men's basketball team won't be ranked #1 any more, when the AP Top 25 poll comes out today. It was fun while it lasted: 2 games. They played two games last week, and they won the first but lost the second. [On Wednesday \(01/30/2013\), they beat Northwestern 68-46](#) in Crisler Arena, then [on Saturday \(02/02/2013\), they lost to \(#3\) Indiana 81-73](#) in Bloomington. The win and the loss leave UM with a record of 20-2, 7-2 in Big Ten play. They are tied for 2nd place in the Big Ten.

The Northwestern game was barely worth talking about. The important part was that Michigan went out and played well against a team that they had beaten earlier this season on the road, and didn't look ahead to the much bigger game on Saturday. Every win is important in the Big Ten, so the win over Northwestern is certainly important, but it was also not a surprise. The big game last week was the one against Indiana, and it didn't go well. Michigan played pretty well, but they were bombarded early, and they never quite recovered. IU was red hot in the first 10 minutes, and they raced out to a quick 15 point lead (28-13). Michigan finally got going with a 10-0 run to pull within 5 (28-23), and they stayed close the rest of the first half. They only trailed by 4 (36-32) at halftime, and they managed to pull into a 40-40 tie in the first 2 minutes of the 2nd half. Indiana pulled away with another run (11-0), but UM fought back again to get within 2 points (53-51) with 11 minutes left, and 3 points (61-58) with 4 minutes left. That was as close as they got down the stretch, and IU hit their free throws to win the game.

So, what went wrong in the Indiana game? Lots of little things that added up to just enough to tip the game in IU's favor:

- [Jordan Morgan](#) didn't start, and he only played 2 minutes, due to his ankle injury. He is certainly Michigan's best post defender, and he was missed.
- The Indiana crowd was frantic, and it seemed to affect the freshmen, especially [Glenn Robinson III](#) and [Nik Stauskas](#), who both played very poorly.
- Indiana couldn't miss in the first 5 minutes, hitting their first 6 shots, including four 3-pointers. Some of this is talent, and some of it is luck. Bad luck for Michigan. If Indiana had hit shots at their normal percentage, the game might have gone much differently. They ended up shooting a good-but-not-great overall percentage (26-for-50 = 52.0%), but if they had started out shooting 52% instead of 100%, Michigan might have managed a meager lead, which certainly would have changed the complexion of the game. As it was, UM played from behind the whole game.
- Stauskas was recovering from the flu, which kept him from practicing on Friday. He seemed a step slower, and his shot was a touch off. Michigan's offense depends on him, and he wasn't able to perform at his usual level.

I know, it sounds like sour grapes, but my point is that IU is not a better team than Michigan, they just had things go their way on Saturday. It doesn't mean that Michigan doesn't stand a chance against them, they just need their fair share of the breaks, and they didn't get them this time. Maybe next time.

The loss to Indiana was discouraging, but the race for the Big Ten title is far from over. All of the contenders still control their own destiny, including Michigan. Even if Indiana wins the rest of their games going into the last game of the regular season vs. Michigan in Ann Arbor, UM can still claim a share of the title by winning all their games and beating IU. The same can be said of the other contenders (Ohio State, Michigan State, and Wisconsin). Even Minnesota still stands a chance, although they'll need a little help.

Let's look at the stats, even though the IU game wasn't pretty. First, [Northwestern](#): Michigan shot pretty well overall (25-for-49 = 51.0%), and they shot 3-pointers pretty well (6-for-15 = 40.0%). They shot fairly well from the free-throw line (12-for-18 = 66.7%), they (barely) won the rebounding battle (31-29), and they handily won the turnover battle (2-8). That's right: 2 turnovers for the whole game, none in the first half. Very impressive. The [Indiana](#) stats aren't nearly as impressive: UM shot fairly well overall (30-for-70 = 42.9%), but not

very well from 3-point range (7-for-23 = 30.4%). They shot free throws fairly well (6-for-7 = 85.7%), but they didn't get to the line very often, especially compared to IU (22-for-25 = 88.0%). Michigan got mauled on the boards (38-29), but they won the turnover battle (8-16). The biggest differences were rebounding and free throws.

Individually, 2 players hit double figures in both games:

- [Trey Burke](#) - 18 points vs. Northwestern, and 25 vs. Indiana.
- [Nik Stauskas](#) - 11 and 10 points. Nik was miserable against Indiana, missing his first four 3-pointers before finally hitting his 5th (and last) attempt.

4 players hit double figures in one game:

- [Tim Hardaway Jr.](#) - 7 and 18 points. After a quite game vs. Northwestern, Tim did his best to keep UM in the Indiana game, along with Burke.
- [Jon Horford](#) - 10 and 4 points. Jon started both games in place of Jordan Morgan.
- [Mitch McGary](#) - 6 and 10 points. Mitch also had 11 rebounds in the Northwestern game.
- [Glenn Robinson III](#) - 13 and 2 points. GR3 had a horrible offensive game vs. IU, and only scored in the closing minutes.

Besides McGary, the bench players didn't have much success scoring:

- [Spike Albrecht](#) - 0 and 0 points.
- [Eso Akunne](#) - 2 and DNP points.
- [Josh Bartelstein](#) - 0 and DNP points. It was great to see Captain Josh back out there after missing all the games since the IUPUI game on 11/12/2012, due to an ankle injury.
- [Max Bielfeldt](#) - 0 and DNP points.
- [Caris LeVert](#) - 1 and 4 points.
- [Blake McLimans](#) - 0 and DNP points.
- [Jordan Morgan](#) - DNP and 0 points. Jordan only played 2 minutes against IU, and it was obvious that he wasn't ready to go full speed yet.
- [Corey Person](#) - 0 and DNP points.
- [Matt Vogrich](#) - 0 and DNP points.

Michigan only got 9 points from the bench in the Northwestern game, but they got 14 points vs. Indiana, which is a little better.

This Week

Michigan is in the middle of a brutal 4-game stretch. The first game of the bunch was on Saturday vs. Indiana, and they have two more tough games this week. On Tuesday (02/05/2013, 9:00 p.m., ESPN), they play (#11) Ohio State in Crisler Arena, then on Saturday (02/09/2013, 12:00 noon EST, ESPN), they at Wisconsin. Ohio State beat Michigan in Columbus a couple weeks ago, so Michigan is looking to return the favor. The previous game was a defensive slugfest, and I expect the rematch to be more of the same. However, the best slow-down defensive team in the nation is Wisconsin, and they are virtually unbeatable at home. I'm hoping that Michigan can win both of these games, but the game at Wisconsin is definitely the tougher of the two.

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

Go Blue!