

Nothing But 'Net – Week #07 – 12/09/2013 – Home Court Advantage

The (#22) University of Michigan men's basketball team played two games last week, and they won one and lost one. They showed the advantage of playing at home: [on Tuesday \(12/03/2013\) they lost badly to \(#10\) Duke \(78-69\)](#) on the road, [then on Saturday \(12/07/2013\) they crushed Houston Baptist University \(107-54\)](#) in Crisler Arena. The loss and the win leave Michigan with a record of 6-3. Don't be surprised if UM drops out of the AP Top-25 when the new poll is released on Monday afternoon.

Of course, there's a big difference between Duke and HBU, but there's also a big difference between playing in Cameron Indoor Stadium and anywhere else. Duke hasn't lost a home non-conference game since 2000. It didn't help that Michigan started the game cold, and fell behind by a dangerous amount (12 points: 21-9) with 6:00 left in the 1st half. Yeah, that's right: after 14 minutes of play, Michigan had 9 points. They woke up a little in the next 5 minutes, and got back within 7 points (29-22) with 30 seconds to go, then gave up a 3-pointers, to go into halftime down 10 (32-22). Duke managed to keep the lead around 8-10 points for most of the 2nd half, although Michigan did get as close as 6 points (46-40) with 9:00 to go. In less than a minute, Duke pushed the lead back up to 12 points, and Michigan never got closer than the final margin of 10 points. They did manage to play Duke even (47-47) in the 2nd half, but the cold start to the game put them into a hole they couldn't dig out of.

So, how did Duke shut down Michigan so convincingly? Simple: they shut down their leading scorer ([Nik Stauskas](#)) and challenged UM to score consistently with anyone else. [Caris LeVert](#) had a great 2nd half, and [Mitch McGary](#) had a good game, but the rest of the team didn't step up, and Duke had no trouble holding off Michigan for the win. How did Duke shut down Stauskas so completely? They assigned a full-time defender to him, and denied him the ball as much as possible. It worked: Nik only attempted 2 shots, and missed both of them.

Incidentally, the UM/Duke game was part of the [ACC/Big Ten Challenge](#), which [ended in a 6-6 tie](#). This is the 2nd tie in a row.

Enough about that, on to the "fun" game of the week: HBU. This was the last "cupcake" game of the season for Michigan, and they took full advantage of it. The lead went back and forth in the first 4:00 of the game, then UM went ahead for good. With about 11:00 left in the 1st half, UM pushed the lead to 10 (29-19), and it never got back to single digits again. The lead was 20 points (50-30) with 3:40 to go in the 1st half, 31 points (65-34) a minute into the 2nd half, 40 points (83-43) with 9:30 to go, and 50 points (95-45) with 5:39 left in the game. At that point, UM emptied the bench, and the practice team actually scored some points to get the final margin of victory up to 53 points.

The stats tell the story in the [Duke](#) game: UM shot pretty poorly overall (25-for-56 = 44.6%), they shot very poorly from 3-point range (3-for-13 = 23.1%), but they shot pretty well from the free-throw line (16-for-19 = 84.2%). They (barely) lost the rebounding battle (31-32), and they lost the turnover battle (12-7). The poor 3-point shooting is what really hurt them.

The stats look much better in the [HBU](#) game: UM shot very well overall (36-for-56 = 64.3%), they shot very well from 3-point range (16-for-26 = 61.5%), and they shot pretty well from the free-throw line (19-for-25 = 76.0%). They won the rebounding battle (33-26), and they won the turnover battle (7-16). They also had 26 assists (on 36 made field goals), including 18 in the 1st half (against only 1 turnover in the 1st half, an incredible assist/turnover ratio). The 16 made 3-pointers tied the school record.

It's interesting to compare the stats for the two games. In both games, Michigan took 56 shots overall. In the Duke game, UM only made 25 of them, and only scored 69 points. In the HBU game, UM made 36 baskets, and scored 107 points. In the Duke game, Michigan could only muster 13 3-point attempts, while they managed 26 in the HBU game. Duke did a great job of forcing Michigan into shots they didn't like.

Let's look at the individual stats. Only one player hit double figures in both games:

- [Mitch McGary](#) - Mitch had 15 points (and 14 rebounds, for a double-double) in the Duke game, and 12 points (and 9 rebounds, almost another double-double) in the HBU game. Mitch is still getting back into playing shape after his back problems, but he's playing a little better each week.

Five players hit double figures in one of the two games:

- [Zak Irvin](#) - 5 and 14. Zak seemed a little dazed by the Cameron crazies in the Duke game, but he played a much better game vs. HBU.
- [Caris LeVert](#) - 24 and 4. Caris kept UM in the game in the 2nd half of the Duke game, but he couldn't do it by himself. He had a very quiet game vs. HBU.
- [Glenn Robinson III](#) - 8 and 17. GR3 wasn't much of a factor in the Duke game, but he was more active against HBU.
- [Nik Stauskas](#) - 4 and 25. All 4 of Nik's points vs. Duke were free throws. He had a much better game vs. HBU.
- [Derrick Walton Jr.](#) - 7 and 14. Derrick also played like a true freshman at Duke, but recovered nicely against HBU.

Several players scored in at least one game this week:

- [Spike Albrecht](#) - 3 and 3. Spike hit a 3-pointer in each game.
- [Max Bielfeldt](#) - DNP and 4.
- [Andrew Dakich](#) - DNP and 3. Andrew's first points as a Wolverine! 1-for-1 3-point shooting.
- [Jon Horford](#) - 0 and 6.
- [Cole McConnell](#) - DNP and 1.
- [Jordan Morgan](#) - 3 and 4.

[Brad Anlauf](#) and [Sean Lonergan](#) played in the HBU game, but didn't score.

This Week

Michigan plays one game this week, and it's a big one: on Saturday (12/14/2013, noon, CBS) they play (#2) Arizona in Crisler Arena. Arizona is currently ranked #2, but the old #1 (Michigan State) lost last week, so Arizona will almost certainly be ranked #1 when the new AP Top-25 poll is released on Monday afternoon. Arizona beat Duke on a neutral court (Preseason NIT in Madison Square Garden) on 11/29/2013, so this will be quite a challenge. Given Michigan's youth and recent inconsistency, I don't expect UM to win, but it's certainly not impossible. Check back next week to see what happened, and why.

Go Blue!