

## Nothing But 'Net – Week #11 – 01/06/2014 – Perfect Start To The Big Ten Season

Happy New Year!

The University of Michigan men's basketball team played two games this week, and they won both of them. [On Thursday \(01/02/2014\), they beat Minnesota 63-60 in Minneapolis](#), then [on Sunday \(01/05/2014\), they beat Northwestern 74-51 in Crisler Arena](#). The two wins raise Michigan's record to 10-4 (2-0 in the Big Ten). A perfect start to the Big Ten season.

The Minnesota win was very important, since "The Barn" is a tough place to play, and Minnesota came into the game with a better record, and was favored (barely, by 2 points). It was a real back-and-forth game, with 9 ties and 10 lead changes. Michigan's biggest lead was only 6 points, and Minnesota's biggest lead was only 8 points. Michigan trailed by 2 points (30-28) at halftime, and fell further behind (36-30) with 16:00 to go in the game. They fought back, and managed to tie the game up (49-49) with just under 6:00 left. From that point, they never trailed, and won by 3. It was nice to see them finish strong.

While the win over Northwestern isn't nearly as impressive, it is still important. If Michigan wants to take a run at the Big Ten title this season, they need to beat all the lower-division teams every time, and win most of the games against the contenders. Even if they don't win the Big Ten title, UM needs every win they can get to help them make the Big Dance in March.

There isn't too much to say about the Northwestern game. Michigan was obviously the better team, and they methodically pulled away from Northwestern for the whole game. It wasn't flashy, and it wasn't pretty, but it was a win.

[The stats from the Minnesota game](#) are very interesting: Michigan shot pretty well overall (20-for-44 = 45.5%), they shot well from 3-point range (7-for-17 = 41.2%), and they shot well from the free-throw line (16-for-22 = 72.7%). The interesting part is the rebounding battle: Michigan got hammered on the boards (38-24), but still managed to win the game. They did win the turnover battle (15-10), but those 5 extra possessions hardly made up for the 14 extra possessions Minnesota got due to the rebounding edge.

[The stats from the Northwestern game](#) are a little more impressive: Michigan shot pretty well overall (25-for-48 = 52.1%), they shot just OK from 3-point range (6-for-18 = 33.3%), and they shot very well from the free-throw line (18-for-22 = 81.8%). They won the rebounding battle handily (33-21), and they won the turnover battle (9-12). Looks like the stats from a blow-out win.

Individually, only one Michigan player hit double figures in both games: [Nik Stauskas](#) had 14 points against Minnesota, and 18 points in the Northwestern game. He didn't shoot particularly well in either game (3-for-7 vs. Minnesota, 5-for-10 vs. Northwestern), and he never really found his 3-point shot in either game (1-for-4 and 2-for-5), but he did get to the free-throw line a lot, and made a lot (7-for-8 and 6-for-8).

4 other players hit double figures in one of the two games:

- [Jon Horford](#) - 14 and 7 points. Jon was one of the stars of the Minnesota win, shooting 6-for-8, and leading the team in rebounding with 9. Those 14 points are a new career-high for Jon. He had a solid game against Northwestern.
- [Zak Irvin](#) - 15 and 5 points. Zak was the other star of the Minnesota game, with 5 crucial 3-pointers (on 8 attempts).
- [Glenn Robinson III](#) - 6 and 12 points. GR3 was having a good game against Minnesota, when he tweaked his ankle early in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half. He sat out the rest of that game, and was questionable for the Northwestern game, but he looked pretty good out there. Not 100%, not full speed, but good enough to play 31 productive minutes.
- [Derrick Walton Jr.](#) - 7 and 11 points. Derrick played pretty well this week. He still hasn't found his shot, but he's starting to make better decisions with the ball.

4 players scored in at least one game, but not in double figures:

- [Spike Albrecht](#) - 0 and 3 points. Spike's only shot in the Northwestern game was a 3-pointer that went in and pushed the Michigan lead to "untouchable".
- [Max Bielfeldt](#) - 0 and 3 points. Max finally hit another 3-pointer. He hit one against South Carolina State, and he's now 2-for-5 shooting 3's this season.
- [Caris LeVert](#) - 4 and 7 points. Caris is back in a slump. He's not shooting well, and he's not making good decisions with the ball. He needs to get back to the form he showed earlier this season.
- [Jordan Morgan](#) - 3 and 8 points. Jordan and Jon Horford combined as a very effective "center by committee" this week. With [Mitch McGary](#) out for the foreseeable future, this is what they need to do: combine for a double-double every game. They did it this week: 14+3 points and 9+2 rebounds vs. Minnesota, and 7+8 points and 8+8 rebounds.

[Brad Anlauf](#), [Andrew Dakich](#), and [Sean Lonergan](#) all played in the Northwestern game, but did not score.

### **This Week**

Michigan only plays one game this week. On Thursday (01/09/2014, 9:00 p.m. EST, ESPN2) they play at Nebraska. It's always tough to win on the road in the Big Ten, but Nebraska is one of the weakest teams in the Big Ten this season, and I expect Michigan to beat them, even though it might not be easy.

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

Go Blue!