

Nothing But 'Net – Week #14 – 01/27/2014 – Another Great Week!

The (#21) University of Michigan men's basketball team played two games this week, and they won both of them. [On Wednesday \(01/22/2014\), they beat \(#10\) Iowa 75-67 in Crisler Arena](#), then [on Saturday \(01/25/2014\), they beat \(#3\) Michigan State in East Lansing](#). The wins raise Michigan's record to 15-4 (7-0 in the Big Ten). Michigan is now all alone in 1st place in the Big Ten.

Combined with [last week's win at \(then #3\) Wisconsin](#), the wins over a pair of Top-10 teams this week give Michigan 3 wins in a row over Top-10 teams, an amazing feat that Michigan has never done before, and no team has accomplished since 1986-1987, when Iowa did it. Even more amazing is that 2 of those 3 wins came on the road, both against teams ranked #3, and in two of the most hostile environments in the nation, not just in the Big Ten. Michigan has now won 9 games in a row, and climbed back into the national rankings. They will certainly move up from #21 when the new rankings come out on Monday afternoon. Oh yeah, Michigan is 27-0 under [Coach Beilein](#) when they score 80 points or more.

These were two very tense, emotional games. Both teams really wanted to win badly, and they both played hard and well. Michigan just played better. After years of mediocrity, Iowa is back in the upper division of the Big Ten, and they have the fastest, deepest, and most experienced team in the league. They came to play on Wednesday, and Michigan had to play their "A" game to beat them. The game was close in the early going, but Iowa was ahead most of the time. With 9:53 left in the 1st half, Iowa was up by 5 (21-16), when Michigan went on a 9-0 run to go up by 4 (25-21). Iowa hung in there, and got the lead back (31-30) with 4:11 to go in the half. Michigan got the lead back right away, and never trailed again. They finished the half strong, and led by 4 (38-34) at halftime. In the early part of the 2nd half, Iowa closed the deficit to 2 points (43-41), but Michigan pushed it up to double figures (54-43), and kept it around 8-10 points for most of the rest of the game. Iowa made it tense for a bit with 2:32 left in the game when they cut the lead to 3 points (67-64), but Michigan finished the game strong with an 8-3 run to win going away. It was a strong, solid performance against a quality opponent.

The win at Breslin was VERY impressive. MSU came into the game ranked #3, with an 11-game winning streak and a 7-0 record in the Big Ten. Breslin was packed (14,797), and the State fans were screaming for blood. It was a very intimidating environment, and the Michigan players kept their poise. Michigan started strong, and hit their first 4 shots, 2 of them 3-pointers, to lead 10-2. MSU came roaring back, and took the lead (19-16) with 10:56 left in the 1st half. MSU pushed the lead as high as 8 points (32-24) with 3:42 left in the half, but UM never let the game get out of reach. They got back within 2 points (32-30), before State took the lead back up to 6 points (36-30) at halftime. Michigan got the lead down to 2 points a couple times in the early parts of the 2nd half, but MSU pushed it back up to 8 points again (49-41) with 13:29 to go. UM used a nice 14-6 run to get back on top again (55-54), but it didn't last long. State held the lead until the 4:01 mark, when Michigan tied it up (60-60). That's when lightning struck: UM hit a 3-pointer, got a defensive stop, and made a layup-and-one for another 3 points, and suddenly UM had a 6-point lead and never looked back. It was 66-60 with 2:29 left, and the rest of the game was the predictable garbage with MSU shooting 3's and calling timeout, and Michigan getting fouled and hitting their free throws (14-of-16 down the stretch). Both teams did what they were supposed to do, but the 6-point lead was just too big for MSU to cut into. It was a glorious victory over a top-notch opponent on their own floor.

With Michigan's sweep of MSU in 2011, and splits in 2012 and 2013, this win makes it 5 wins for Michigan in the last 7 games against State. Not too shabby. Since Michigan State has had more success in the last few seasons, it's easy to forget that the overall series record is still strongly in Michigan's favor, 96-76 (89-76 after NCAA sanctions).

Time to look at [the stats for the Iowa game](#). Michigan shot pretty well overall (27-for-58 = 46.6%), but they didn't shoot very well from 3-point range (8-for-27 = 29.6%). They shot free throws well (13-for-16 = 81.3%). They lost the rebounding battle (barely: 32-33), but

they won the turnover battle (10-14). They won the game because Iowa shot 3-pointers even worse than Michigan (2-for-10 = 20.0%).

[The stats for the MSU game](#) are much more impressive. Michigan shot well overall (22-for-49 = 44.9%), they shot 3-pointers very well (11-for-19 = 57.9%), and they shot free throws very well (and often: 25-for-30 = 83.3%). Michigan won the rebounding battle handily (35-29), but they lost the turnover battle badly (11-5). Still, the excellent 3-point shooting and free-throw shooting by Michigan was enough to beat State.

Individually, only 1 Michigan player hit double figures in both games:

- [Nik Stauskas](#) – 26 points vs. Iowa and 19 points vs. MSU. Nik was the star, and leading scorer, in both games again. He had a tough time shooting 3-pointers in the Iowa game (4-for-9), but he was on fire in the MSU game (5-for-6). Those 26 points vs. Iowa tie Nik's career high.

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

- [Zak Irvin](#) - 11 and 3 points. The Iowa game was the first time Zak has hit double figures since the first Big Ten game of the season (at Minnesota).
- [Caris LeVert](#) – 5 and 17 points. Caris didn't do much in the Iowa game, but he was a force in the MSU game, with three 3-pointers (on 5 attempts) and 6-for-7 shooting at the free throw line. He also had 8 rebounds vs. MSU.
- [Jordan Morgan](#) – 12 and 4 points. Once again, Jordan was one half of a "center by committee" with [Jon Horford](#), and they got the job done in both games.
- [Glenn Robinson III](#) – 14 and 9 points. GR3 had a terrible week shooting 3-pointers: 0-for-5 vs. Iowa and 0-for-2 vs. MSU. He did have 9 rebounds vs. Iowa, which ties his career high.
- [Derrick Walton Jr.](#) – 0 and 19 points. Derrick was sick with flu-like symptoms for the Iowa game, so he only played 3 minutes, and didn't score. He was all recovered by the MSU game, and played the best game of his young career. 19 points is a new career high for him, and he looked great scoring them. He hit both of his 3-point shots, he hit a couple amazing driving layups where he got hammered and still finished through contact, and he hit 9 of his 10 free throw attempts, many of them in the last few seconds when State was trying desperately to come back. In short, he looked great.

2 players scored in at least one game, but didn't hit double figures:

- [Spike Albrecht](#) – 7 and 3 points. Spike started the Iowa game in place of Derrick Walton, Jr., due to his flu-like illness, and he played very well, including making his traditional single 3-pointer. Sadly, he missed his only 3-point attempt in the MSU game, ending his streak of exactly one 3-pointer in every Big Ten game except the first one (Minnesota) at 5 games.
- [Jon Horford](#) – 0 and 6 points. It was a quiet week for Jon.

[Max Bielfeldt](#) played (4 minutes) in the MSU game, but didn't score.

This Week

Michigan just finished "The Gauntlet, Part 1" portion of their schedule, and they managed to win all 3 of the games, which were all against Top-10 teams. Things get a little easier for Michigan, but they can't let their guard down. They play two games this week. On Thursday (01/30/2014, 9:00 p.m., ESPN) they play Purdue in Crisler Arena, then on Sunday (02/02/2014, 1:00 p.m., CBS) they play at Indiana. Michigan should be able to handle Purdue pretty easily, but it's always tough playing IU in Assembly Hall. However, if UM can beat Wisconsin in the Kohl Center and MSU in the Breslin Center, they can beat IU in Assembly Hall. It will be another hard-fought, emotional game, and UM will have to play their "A" game again to come home with the "W".

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

Go Blue!