

Nothing But 'Net – Week #15 – 02/03/2014 – Back To Earth

The (#10) University of Michigan men's basketball team played two games this week, and they won one and lost one. [On Thursday \(01/30/2014\), they beat Purdue 75-66 in Crisler Arena](#), then [on Sunday \(02/02/2014\), they lost to Indiana 63-52 in Bloomington](#). The win and the loss leave Michigan with a record of 16-5 (8-1 in the Big Ten). Michigan is now tied for 1st place in the Big Ten.

They had it all within their grasp. They not only survived, but thrived during a tough 3-game stretch ("The Gauntlet, Part 1") of games against Top-10 teams, two of them on the road in some of the toughest venues in the country. They won the "trap game" vs. Purdue, when they could have suffered a let-down after those 3 tough games. They fought their way up to a Top-10 ranking, and saw 4 teams ahead of them all lose over the weekend. They could have moved up as high as #6 in the country if they could have beaten Indiana. All they had to do was play their normal game, and they would have beaten IU. Instead, they played their worst game in 6 weeks. They missed open jumpers. They didn't hustle after "50-50" balls. They didn't block out. They looked like they expected another strong "miracle" finish to happen all by itself, regardless of how they played. That's not how it works.

Hopefully, UM learns a valuable lesson from this game. They still control their own destiny with respect to the Big Ten title. They have already beaten the other contenders once, and they can beat them again, if they play their normal game. They don't need to play the best game of the season, they just need to play their normal game. They can't play their worst game.

The Purdue game was workmanlike. UM played their normal game, and they won convincingly. They out-hustled Purdue, and wanted to win the game more than the Boilermakers.

The IU game was embarrassing. A few UM players played hard, like they wanted to win, but some of them just "phoned it in". It didn't help that IU played their best game of the season, way over their heads. Still, it was a game UM could have won, if they had just played like they cared.

Here's the quick version of the stats: against [Purdue](#), UM shot very well, rebounded OK, but lost the turnover battle. In the [Indiana](#) game, UM shot terribly, got crushed on the boards, but won the turnover battle (whoopee!). The stats reflect the results.

Individually, [Caris LeVert](#) and [Derrick Walton Jr.](#) played well this week, with double figures in both games. Caris even had his first career double-double vs. Purdue (14 points and 11 rebounds). Derrick is blossoming. [Jordan Morgan](#) played hard in both games, and had double figures in the Purdue game and 10 rebounds in the IU game. [Nik Stauskas](#) had a good game vs. Purdue, but he was disappointing vs. IU. He missed several wide-open jumpers early, and once he had a bad start, he let it turn into a bad game. [Glenn Robinson III](#) had a bad week. He looked lost out there, especially in the Indiana game. He just drifted around, and stood still watching a lot. He's got massive potential, but he doesn't seem to know how to turn it into production.

That's the starters, and the bench didn't contribute much. [Spike Albrecht](#), [Jon Horford](#), and [Zak Irvin](#) all had their moments, but not enough of them.

This Week

Michigan plays two games this week. On Wednesday (02/05/2014, 6:30 p.m., BTN) they play Nebraska in Crisler Arena, then on Saturday (02/08/2014, 2:00 p.m. EST, ESPN) they play at Iowa. Michigan should be able to handle Nebraska, especially since they've already played them in Lincoln and beaten them. The game at Iowa is another matter. Before they played so poorly at Indiana, I would have said that "UM has been playing at a consistently high level, which should help them go into Iowa City and steal a win", but after the IU game I'm not so

sure any more. The Iowa game is the start of a 4-game tough sequence ("The Gauntlet, Part 2") that continues with games at Ohio State, then home vs. Wisconsin and Michigan State. For "The Gauntlet, Part 1" (at Wisconsin, home vs. Iowa, at MSU), most observers would have been happy with a 2-1 record, but understood 1-2. For "The Gauntlet, Part 2", a 2-2 record will be acceptable, but a 1-3 record won't be surprising.

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

Go Blue!