

Nothing But 'Net – Week #17 – 02/17/2014 – Slow Starts

The (#15) University of Michigan men's basketball team played two games this week, and they won one and lost one. [On Tuesday \(02/11/2014\), they beat \(#22\) Ohio State 70-60 in Columbus](#), then [on Sunday \(02/16/2014\), they lost to \(#21\) Wisconsin 75-62 in Crisler Arena](#). The win and the loss leave Michigan with a record of 18-7 (10-3 in the Big Ten). Michigan is still tied for 1st place in the Big Ten. More about that later.

In both games, Michigan started out slowly, but they only recovered in one of them. In the OSU game, they were down by 8 points (13-5) in the first 6 minutes, and 10 points (28-18) with 3:22 left in the 1st half. They managed to get the deficit down to 4 points (30-26) by halftime, and finally took the lead (44-43) with 10:56 left in the game. Once they got the lead, they never trailed again, although it was still a one-point game (51-50) with 6:22 left. At that point, UM went on a 13-2 run to make it 64-52, and that was the ballgame.

The Wisconsin game was so sad. Michigan had already lost the game by the first media timeout (down 14-4 with 15:09 left). Sure, there were still 35 minutes left, but the early UW blitz left Michigan looking dazed and beaten, and took the crowd out of the game. Michigan sleep-walked through one of the most listless halves of basketball they've played at home in a couple years, and trailed by 15 points (34-19) at the break. That's less than a point a minute. Disgusting. In the 2nd half, UM got back on track offensively, but the defense was just as bad as the 1st half, and they never got any closer than 3 points (52-39, with 6:16 left). They were still in it, down 5 points (56-51) with 4:07 left, when Wisconsin went on an 11-1 run to put the game out of reach.

The Wisconsin game was the worst home loss by Michigan since two seasons ago (2011-2012), when they lost to Purdue, 75-61. That was their only home loss that season. Last season (2012-2013), UM only lost one home game, 72-71 to Indiana. This season, they've already lost 2 home games: to #1 Arizona (72-70) and the abovementioned mess against Wisconsin.

The stats are surprisingly similar between the 2 games, but I'm not going to go into them in any detail. Michigan didn't shoot very well in either game, but they did shoot 3-pointers pretty well against [OSU](#). Not so much vs. [Wisconsin](#). Michigan is a team that looks good when they hit their 3-pointers, and looks terrible when they miss them.

Individually, [Nik Stauskas](#) was the only UM player to hit double figures in both games (15 vs. OSU, 11 vs. UW), although he didn't have a very good game vs. Wisconsin. [Caris LeVert](#) was the only player who had a good game against Wisconsin, with a new career-high 25 points. He had 9 points vs. OSU. [Zak Irvin](#) hit some big baskets against OSU (10 points), but he was ineffective in the UW game (6 points, 3 of them in "garbage time"). The other freshman, [Derrick Walton Jr.](#), played well down the stretch vs. OSU (13 points), but was terrible against Wisconsin (0 points). Then there's the Endless Enigma, [Glenn Robinson III](#): as usual, he played in spurts. When he got involved in the game, he was a force, but for long stretches he was content to stand around in the corner and watch. He had 9 points vs. OSU, and 10 vs. Wisconsin. The two-headed center ([Jon Horford](#)/[Jordan Morgan](#)) played hard in both games, but only produced in the OSU game (8 for Horford, 6 for Morgan). In the Wisconsin game, Horford had 3 points, and Morgan had 5. Finally, [Spike Albrecht](#) tried to spark the team, but didn't accomplish much: 0 points vs. OSU, and 2 free throws in the UW game.

All in all, it was a mediocre week. After the big win at OSU (their first since 2003), Michigan had a chance to set themselves up to play Michigan State for sole possession of 1st place in the Big Ten next Sunday. All they had to do was beat Wisconsin, who they had already beaten in Madison earlier this season. Fortunately, right after Michigan lost to Wisconsin, [Michigan State somehow managed to lose to Nebraska in East Lansing](#), so Michigan and Michigan State are still tied for 1st place.

This Week

Michigan only plays one game this week. On Sunday (02/23/2014, noon, CBS) they play Michigan State in Crisler Arena. MSU has one other game this week (Thursday at Purdue), so they will probably come into the game on Sunday with a half-game lead, but Michigan can pull into sole possession of 1st place by beating them.

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

Go Blue!