

## Nothing But 'Net – Week #18 – 02/24/2014 – Sweep!

The (#20) University of Michigan men's basketball team only played one game this week, but it was a big one, and they won it! [On Sunday \(02/23/2014\), they beat \(#13\) Michigan State 79-70 in Crisler Arena](#). The win raises Michigan's record to 19-7 (11-3 in the Big Ten). Michigan is now all alone in 1<sup>st</sup> place in the Big Ten. Much more about that later.

This was a HUGE game, and a huge win. Coming into this week, UM and MSU were tied for 1<sup>st</sup> place in the Big Ten, but State played a midweek (Thursday) game at Purdue and won it, so they were in 1<sup>st</sup> place by a half game when the two teams met on Sunday. [Michigan had won the game in East Lansing earlier in the season](#), so they were going for the season sweep, and they got it. In fact, UM has now beaten State in 6 of the last 8 games, including 4 years in a row in Crisler, which means that this year's senior class at MSU will use up their eligibility ("graduate", ha!) without winning in Ann Arbor. Oh yeah, Michigan now leads the overall series with MSU 97-76.

The game itself was tense and exciting. As usual, Michigan started slowly, and fell behind by 9 points (17-8) with 13:06 to go in the 1<sup>st</sup> half. State pushed the lead up to 11 points (22-11) with 10:50 to go, before UM woke up and started climbing back into the game. UM went on a 10-0 run to get within 1 point (22-21) with 6:08 left in the half. MSU pushed the lead back up to 7 points (31-24) with 2:18 left, but Michigan hung in there, and managed to get within 2 points (36-34) at halftime, thanks to a last-second 3-pointer by [Caris LeVert](#). In the 2<sup>nd</sup> half, UM finally managed to get on top again, 39-38, with 18:54 to go, but the lead didn't last long. MSU led by 5 (48-43) with 14:40 to go, when went on a 21-4 run over the next 7 minutes. That made it 64-52 Michigan, with 7:21 left, and State never got any closer than 8 points the rest of the way. Michigan played smart and tough down the stretch, and made their free throws.

The [game stats](#) are very interesting. Usually, the winning team shoots better overall than the losing team, but not in this game. Michigan shot pretty well overall (27-for-54 = 50.0%), but MSU shot a better percentage (26-for-48 = 54.2%). That one extra basket for Michigan certainly helped, but it doesn't explain a 9-point win. Maybe 3-point shooting? Nope. UM shot a slightly better percentage (8-for-19 = 42.1% vs. 9-for-23 = 39.1%), but MSU made 1 more 3-pointer. What's left? Free throws: Michigan made more free throws (17-for-25 = 68.0%) than MSU attempted (9-for-15 = 60.0%). That's where the game was won. As expected, MSU won the rebounding battle easily (31-24), but they threw away those 7 extra possessions, and 3 more besides. UM won the turnover battle decisively: 3-13.

Individually, 3 Michigan players hit double figures in the game:

- [Caris LeVert](#) - 23 points. Caris kept Michigan in the game in the 1<sup>st</sup> half, then helped put MSU away in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half.
- [Glenn Robinson III](#) - 15 points. GR3 wasn't very efficient shooting (6-for-12, including 0-for-3 from 3-point range), but he did lead the team in rebounding (5),
- [Nik Stauskas](#) - 25 points. MSU tried the ball-denial defense on Nik, but he still managed to get free and hit some big shots, especially in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half. He also led the team in assists (5).

5 other players played, and they all scored, just not in double figures:

- [Spike Albrecht](#) - 3 points. Another timely 3-pointer by Spike.
- [Jon Horford](#) - 2 points. Jon fouled out trying to slow down MSU's main weapon, Adreian Payne. He had limited success.
- [Zak Irvin](#) - 2 points. A quiet game for Zak.
- [Jordan Morgan](#) - 4 points. Jordan almost fouled out trying to defend against Payne. He also had limited success.
- [Derrick Walton Jr.](#) - 5 points. Derrick also had a quiet game.

**This Week**

Michigan plays two games this week. On Wednesday (02/26/2014, 7:00 p.m. EST, BTN), Michigan plays at Purdue, then on Saturday (03/01/2014, 6:00 p.m., BTN) they play Minnesota in Crisler Arena. These are both teams that Michigan has already beaten this season, and they are in the lower half of the standings, but Michigan can't afford to take either of them lightly. Now that UM has a one-game lead in the loss column, they need to finish strong and win their last 4 regular season games, for an undisputed Big Ten title. They can't afford to take any team on their schedule lightly. They must focus on each game, and play as hard as they can.

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

Go Blue!