

Nothing But 'Net – Week #02 – 11/17/2014 – Early Season Cupcakes

The (#24) University of Michigan men's basketball team played 2 games last week, and they won them both, handily. Of course, both opponents were Division II teams, and one of the games was an exhibition, but still. Wins are wins. [On Monday \(11/10/2014\), Michigan trounced Wayne State 86-43](#), in the exhibition game, then [on Saturday \(11/15/2014\), UM beat Hillsdale College 92-68](#). Both games were in Crisler Arena. Since the exhibition game doesn't count, UM's record is now 1-0.

Michigan looked much better against Wayne State than they did vs. Hillsdale. In the WSU game, UM opened a nice lead early, and never looked back. In the Hillsdale game, UM started slow and Hillsdale was hot, and Michigan found themselves down 15-6 early. They hit three straight 3-pointers to tie the game up, then never trailed again, but they didn't really pull away until the last 10 minutes of the game.

These early games are essentially "controlled scrimmages", where [Coach Beilein](#) gets to try out unusual combinations of players, and almost everyone gets to play, and score. With the outcome never in doubt, the players are allowed a little more leeway, and small mistakes are noted but not worried about as much. The bigger, tougher games are coming, and soon.

So, what can we learn about this team from blowout wins against substandard opponents? Not much. We can see who looks comfortable out there, and we can check out the freshmen, but that's about it.

Stats

The [stats for the WSU game](#) look like you would expect: Michigan played pretty well, but a little ragged at times. UM shot pretty well overall (28-for-56 = 50.0%), but not so well from 3-point range (7-for-22 = 31.8%). They shot a lot of free throws, and most of them went in (23-for-29 = 79.3%). They won the rebounding battle (40-33) and the turnover battle (8-18). Those are reasonable stats for an exhibition against an overmatched opponent.

The [stats for the Hillsdale game](#) are actually more impressive than the WSU stats, except that UM let Hillsdale score a lot more easily. UM shot pretty well overall again (30-for-58 = 51.7%), and they shot a lot better from 3-point range (11-for-19 = 57.9%). They even shot free throws better (21-for-25 = 84.0%). They won the rebounding battle (35-28) and the turnover battle (6-14). They played well enough to win comfortably, but they certainly didn't clobber Hillsdale the way most people expected.

Individually, the 3 sophomores ([Zak Irvin](#), [Caris LeVert](#), and [Derrick Walton Jr.](#)) all hit double figures in both games. Irvin had 13 and 21 points, LeVert had 16 and 20 points, and Walton had 11 and 22 points. No one else hit double figures. The other 2 starters (freshmen [Kameron Chatman](#) and [Mark Donnal](#)) both played pretty well. Chatman had 9 and 4 points, and Donnal had 4 and 9 points. Chatman was the leading rebounder in the WSU game (6).

At this point, it looks like there are 5 bench players who will be part of the main rotation: [Muhammad-Ali Abdur-Rahkman](#) (freshman), [Spike Albrecht](#) (junior), [Aubrey Dawkins](#) (freshman), [Ricky Doyle](#) (freshman), and [DJ Wilson](#) (freshman). These 5 guys all played in both games, and they all scored in at least one game. MAAR had 2 and 0 points, Albrecht had 4 and 4 points, Dawkins had 8 and 3 points, Doyle had 4 and 7 points, and Wilson had 9 and 2 points. Doyle and Wilson looked the best of the non-starting freshmen.

The other bench players ([Max Bielfeldt](#) [junior], [Andrew Dakich](#) [sophomore], [Austin Hatch](#) [freshman], and [Sean Lonergan](#) [sophomore]) had a mixed week. Bielfeldt played in the WSU game and had 5 points, but didn't play at all in the Hillsdale game. Dakich didn't play in either game, even when Michigan had a 40-point lead with 1:40 left in the WSU exhibition game. Lonergan played in both games, but didn't score in either. Then there's Austin Hatch: he played in the final minute of both games, and he actually scored a point in the WSU game! It

was a very emotional moment, and he got a great ovation for his efforts. He didn't attempt a shot in the Hillsdale game, but he did get in.

This Week

This week, Michigan plays 2 games, both in Crisler Arena, and both as "regional" games in the [Legends Classic](#). Even though these games are associated with the Legends Classic, they don't have any effect on the Championship Round in the Barclay Center next week. Michigan and the other 3 "host" teams (Oregon, Villanova, and Virginia Commonwealth) are all guaranteed spots in the Championship Round, regardless of what happens in the 2 "regional" games that they each host. The 2 games that UM is hosting are Bucknell (Monday 11/17/2014, 8:00 p.m., BTN) and Detroit-Mercy (Thursday 11/20/2014, 6:00 p.m., BTN). Michigan will be favored to win both games, but they will be a lot more challenging than the 2 Division II teams that Michigan has faced so far. Come on down to Crisler Arena to see how they do.

Go Blue!