

Nothing But 'Net – Week #04 – 12/01/2014 – Legends Classic Championship Games & One

The (#19) University of Michigan men's basketball team played 3 games last week, and they won 2 and lost 1. [On Monday \(11/24/2014\), UM beat Oregon 70-63](#), [on Tuesday \(11/25/2014\), UM lost to \(#12\) Villanova 60-55](#), then [on Saturday \(11/29/2014\), UM beat Nicholls State 91-62](#). The wins and loss leave Michigan with a record of 5-1 on the season.

The Monday and Tuesday games were the championship round of the [Legends Classic](#), in the Barclays Center in Brooklyn, NY. The Saturday game was a "guarantee game" against a "cupcake", in Crisler Arena.

The 2 Legends Classic games were both close and exciting, and were good tests for a young, inexperienced team like Michigan. Michigan led the whole game against Oregon, but they could never really pull away. Every time they got a 5-6 point lead, Oregon came right back and pulled within 1-2, or even tied it up. The young UM players showed pretty good poise in the face of adversity, and learned some valuable lessons.

The Villanova game the next night was also close, although Villanova threatened to put the game out of reach at the end of the 1st half and the first few minutes of the 2nd half. With 7:13 left in the 1st half, Michigan led by 2 (20-18). They missed their next 10 shots in the half, including layups and dunks, while Villanova rattled off a 9-0 run, to make it 27-20 at halftime. They weren't done yet: UM missed 2 more shots to start the 2nd half, while Villanova extended their lead to 33-20. At that point, UM could have just folded their tents and gone home, but they fought back. After 12 straight misses, they finally hit a basket, then 2 more in just over a minute, and suddenly they were back in the game, down 33-27 with 16:17 left. It took them 5 more minutes, but Michigan finally regained the lead (39-38) with 11:17 left. They pushed it as high as 8 points (51-43) with 5:56 to go, then they went cold again. They missed 6 shots in a row, and Villanova went up by 1 (52-51) with 2:03 left. Michigan had one final lead (55-54) with 0:50 left, and a chance to add another point or two, but [Mark Donnal](#) missed the front end of a one-and-one with 0:31 left. Villanova scored with 0:13 left to go up 56-55, and they blocked a dunk attempt by [Zak Irvin](#) with 0:05 to go. UM fouled them, hoping they'd miss their free throws, but all that did was give Villanova 4 more points.

It was a shame that UM lost, after battling back from the 13-point deficit, and building an 8-point lead late in the game. The 2 long scoring droughts really hurt, but it was still encouraging to see Michigan continue to play with poise in the face of adversity.

There isn't much to say about the Nicholls State game: UM raced out to an early lead, built it up to "insurmountable" by halftime, and toyed with NSU for the whole 2nd half. It was an easy, stress-free game.

Time to look at the stats. The [stats for the Oregon game](#) are just OK: UM shot OK overall (21-for-46 = 45.7%), decent from 3-point range (5-for-13 = 38.5%), and pretty well from the free-throw line (23-for-29 = 79.3%). They got hammered on the boards (29-41), but they won the turnover battle (8-14). The 2 key stats here are the 3-point shooting and rebounds. It's been a while since anyone held Michigan to just 13 attempts from 3-point range, and I've never seen a team hit the boards like Oregon did: they had 18 offensive rebounds!

The [stats for the Villanova game](#) are worse than the Oregon stats: UM didn't shoot very well overall (23-for-56 = 41.1%), they didn't shoot 3-pointers very well (6-for-21 = 28.6%), and they didn't shoot free throws very well, or very often (3-for-5 = 60.0%). UM lost the rebounding battle (31-35), but (barely) won the turnover battle (11-13). It's been a while since anyone held UM to just 5 free throws in a game.

Finally, the "fun" stats for the week, [in the Nicholls State game](#): UM shot pretty well overall (32-for-58 = 55.2%), they shot 3-pointers pretty well (14-for-24 = 58.3%), and they shot free throws pretty well (13-for-16 = 81.3%). They won the rebounding battle handily (36-

24), and the turnover battle just barely (13-14). It was an easy win against an overmatched opponent, and it shows.

Individually, 2 players hit double figures in all 3 games: [Zak Irvin](#) (19 vs. Oregon, 11 vs. Villanova, and 14 vs. NSU) and [Caris LeVert](#) (18, 16, and 24). The third member of Michigan's "Big 3" this season had an off week: [Derrick Walton Jr.](#) had 6 points vs. Oregon, 10 points vs. Villanova, and didn't play in the NSU game due to a toe injury. [It hasn't been announced yet when he'll return to action.](#)

The other 2 regular starters did OK. [Kameron Chatman](#) had 4 points vs. Oregon and 6 points vs. Villanova before he finally had his first double-figures game vs. NSU: 11 points. [Mark Donnal](#) had 4, 3, and 6 points, and didn't look very comfortable out there.

With Walton injured, [Spike Albrecht](#) started the NSU game, and played well. He had 10 points in that game, to go with 7 points vs. Oregon and 3 points vs. Villanova.

The bench contributed quite a bit this week, which is encouraging. The main contributor was [Ricky Doyle](#), with 10, 4, and 15 points. He looked better than Donnal at center, and he might work his way into the starting lineup soon. The other freshman "big man", [DJ Wilson](#), played in both Legends Classic games, but didn't score in either. He injured his knee in the Villanova game, and sat out the NSU game. [It hasn't been announced yet when he'll return to action.](#) The 3rd "big man" off the bench, [Max Bielfeldt](#), had a quiet week, with 0, 2, and 4 points.

The 2 freshmen guards on the bench ([Muhammad-Ali Abdur-Rahkman](#) and [Aubrey Dawkins](#)) played a little in all 3 games this week, but they didn't contribute much. MAAR failed to score in all 3 games, while Dawkins had 2, 0, and 5 points. [Sean Loneragan](#) only played in the NSU game, and he scored 2 points! [Austin Hatch](#) played for 1:47 in the NSU game, but didn't take a shot, despite the whole team and home crowd yelling for him to shoot.

Finally, there's [Andrew Dakich](#): [Coach Beilein](#) announced that he's being redshirted this season, which is why he hasn't played, even in "garbage time".

This Week

This week, Michigan plays 2 games, both in Crisler Arena. On Tuesday (12/02/2014, 7:30 p.m., ESPN) they play Syracuse, then on Saturday (12/06/2014, 12:00 p.m., BTN), they play NJIT (New Jersey Institute of Technology). The game vs. Syracuse is part of the [ACC/Big Ten Challenge](#). Syracuse (5-1) started the season ranked #23, right ahead of Michigan, but they got thumped by Cal-Berkeley on a neutral floor, and dropped out of the Top-25. It will be a very good test for Michigan. The NJIT game is another "guarantee game" against a "cupcake", and UM will throttle them.

Come on down to Crisler to see the Wolverines in person, and check back here next week to see what happened, and why.

Go Blue!