

Nothing But 'Net – Week #06 – 12/15/2014 – Season On The Brink

The University of Michigan men's basketball team played 2 games last week, and they lost both of them. [On Tuesday \(12/09/2014\), UM lost at home to Eastern Michigan 45-42](#), then [on Saturday \(12/13/2014\), they lost at \(#3\) Arizona 80-53](#). The two losses drop Michigan's season record to 6-4.

Michigan has now lost 3 games in a row, and the season is definitely on the brink. The loss to Arizona was understandable, but the loss to EMU was embarrassing (although not as embarrassing as the previous loss, to NJIT). The NJIT loss appears to have destroyed whatever confidence Michigan had after the big win over Syracuse, and UM is now playing scared, and "playing not to lose" instead of playing to win. Michigan has 2 more non-conference games left to try to regain some confidence and save the season, before plunging into a tough Big Ten schedule. If they start Big Ten play in their current shape, they'll be lucky to win 3 games.

The EMU game was truly ugly. Michigan could not do anything offensively against EMU's 2-3 zone defense, the same defense they solved one week before vs. Syracuse. Every UM player looked scared and tentative, and EMU played with poise and enthusiasm. The last time UM was held to 42 points was back in the Truman administration. Sigh.

The Arizona game was also ugly, but at least Arizona is a quality opponent, playing at home. I expected a 30-point beatdown, and it was close to that. Last season, in Ann Arbor, UM almost beat Arizona when they were ranked #1, but this season's team didn't stand a chance.

I'm not going to examine the team or individual stats for either game. In short, the team played poorly in both games, and no one had a good week individually.

This Week

This week, Michigan only plays one game. On Saturday (12/20/2014, 12:00 p.m., ESPN2), they play Southern Methodist (SMU) in Crisler. Before the NJIT debacle and the 3-game losing streak, I would have expected UM to beat SMU comfortably, but now... If UM wants to salvage the season, they need to start by beating SMU.

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

Go Blue!