

Nothing But 'Net – Week #06 – 12/07/2015 – Back On Track

The University of Michigan men's basketball team played two games last week, and they won them both. [On Tuesday \(12/01/2015\), UM won at N.C. State 66-59](#), then [on Saturday \(12/05/2015\), UM beat Houston Baptist 82-57 in Crisler Arena](#). The win over NCSU was part of the [ACC/Big Ten Challenge](#), which the Big Ten won again. The two wins raise Michigan's record to 6-2.

The win over NCSU was actually pretty impressive. It was Michigan's first true road game, after 3 neutral-site games in the Bahamas, and it came after UM had travel problems on the way home from the Bahamas and only had 48 hours in Ann Arbor to regroup. NCSU led for the first 10:00 of the game, although UM stayed close, and Michigan finally opened up a decent lead (28-18) with 3:21 left in the 1st half. They led by 8 (34-26) at halftime, and pushed the lead up to 15 (45-30) in the first 5:00 of the 2nd half. The next 5:00 were a little scary, as NCSU went on at 12-1 run, and got within 4 (46-42) with 10:00 to go. Michigan pushed the lead back up to 10 (56-46) with 6:23 left, and never let NCSU get closer than 7 points the rest of the way. The Wolverines played with poise down the stretch in a hostile environment, which is good practice for the rest of the season.

The win over HBU was not nearly as impressive. Sure, UM won by 25 points, but they had a hard time shaking HBU in the first half. They started out great, leading 11-0 after just 3:15, but HBU hung around, and got within 2 (26-24) with 4:34 left in the 1st half. UM finished the half with an 11-4 run, to lead by 9 (37-28) at halftime. Michigan came out a little more focused in the 2nd half, and pushed the lead up to an insurmountable 24 points (58-34) with 11:24 left in the game. HBU never got any closer than 17 points the rest of the game, and UM won by 25. Still, it was a lethargic performance against an overmatched opponent. Let's blame it on a post-ACC/Big Ten game hangover, and finals.

So, what did we learn about this season's UM team this week? We learned that they can bounce back from a couple bad games (Xavier and UConn) to beat some decent teams (Texas and NCSU). We learned that they can win on the road, in a hostile environment. And, we learned that they can still win convincingly against an inferior opponent, even when they don't play that well. These are all encouraging things.

Stats

The [stats for the NCSU game](#) are pretty solid. UM shot well overall (24-for-48 = 50.0%), the shot decently from 3-point range (7-for-20 = 35.0%), and they shot well from the free-throw line (11-for-13 = 84.6%). They lost the rebounding battle (36-32), but got close, and they lost the turnover battle (11-7). It was their overall shooting that won the game.

The [stats for the HBU game](#) are a little better. Once again, UM shot pretty well overall (38-for-58 = 48.3%), they shot very well from 3-point range (11-for-23 = 47.8%), and they shot free throws pretty well (10-for-15 = 75.0%). As expected, they won the rebounding battle (33-29) and the turnover battle (6-16). Those 14 extra possessions really helped.

Individually, there was some bad news this week: [Derrick Walton Jr.](#) injured his ankle 13 minutes into the 1st half of the NCSU game, and missed the rest of that game, and the HBU game. It isn't clear when he'll be back, but it could be as early as this week.

Due to the injury, [Coach Beilein](#) had to change the starting lineup again. For the NCSU game, he started [Aubrey Dawkins](#), [Ricky Doyle](#), [Zak Irvin](#), [Caris LeVert](#), and Walton. For the HBU game, he started [Muhammad-Ali Abdur-Rahkman](#) (MAAR) in place of Walton.

LeVert was the only starter to hit double figures in both games, with 18 vs. NCSU and 25 vs. HBU. Dawkins was the only other starter to hit double figures in either game, with 16 vs. HBU and 2 points in the NCSU game. The other starters didn't do much: MAAR had 6 points in his only start, Doyle had 6 and 2 points, Irvin had 7 and 7, and Walton had 4 points, in 13 minutes.

The bench chipped in some points this week. [Duncan Robinson](#) hit double figures in both games, with 17 vs. NCSU and 19 vs. HBU. MAAR had 4 points in the NCSU game, [Mark Donna](#) didn't play in the NCSU game and had 2 points in the HBU game, [Moritz Wagner](#) had 8 and 1, and [DJ Wilson](#) had 0 and 4. [Spike Albrecht](#) and [Kameron Chatman](#) both played in both games, but didn't score.

There was some question before the season about whether Robinson would be able to get his shots off vs. quality Division I opponents, and it is becoming apparent that he can, and that he'll hit more than 50% of them. This is good news.

This Week

This week, Michigan plays two games. On Tuesday (12/08/2015, 9:00 p.m., ESPN2), they play at Southern Methodist (SMU), then on Saturday (12/12/2015, 12:00 p.m., ESPNU), they play Delaware State in Crisler Arena. The game vs. SMU will be UM's toughest test so far, equivalent to the Xavier and UConn games. Michigan got manhandled in both of those games, so this will be a good yardstick to see if UM has fixed any of the problems that were exposed earlier. Delaware State is a cupcake, and will be no challenge.

Tune by to see how Michigan does vs. SMU, and come by Crisler for the Delaware State game. In any case, check back next week to see what happened, and why.

Go Blue!