

Nothing But 'Net – Week #10 – 01/04/2016 – Donnal-Fest

Happy New Year!

It was a happy New Year, [with the University of Michigan football team winning the Buffalo Wild Wings Citrus Bowl over Florida 41-7](#), and the University of Michigan men's basketball team winning both games this week. [On Wednesday \(12/30/2015\), they won at Illinois 78-68](#), then [on Saturday \(01/02/2016\), they beat Penn State 79-56](#) in Crisler Arena. The two wins raise Michigan's record to 12-3 (2-0 in the Big Ten). Michigan is tied for 1st place in the Big Ten.

The big story this week was the sudden emergence of redshirt sophomore [Mark Donnal](#). He had a career-high 26 points vs. Illinois, then he followed it up with a solid 16 points vs. PSU. His previous career high was 13 points vs. SMU last season. He broke that record twice this week. He also had a career-high 9 rebounds vs. Illinois, just missing a double-double. He followed that up with 8 more rebounds vs. PSU. He had a monster week.

The Illinois game was close and exciting for most of the contest. Illinois jumped out to a quick 5 point lead (7-2) with 14:53 left in the 1st half, before Michigan got going. UM tied it (9-9), and the lead seesawed back and forth until it was 16-16, with 7:49 left in the half. Illinois went on a quick 13-6 run, to make it 29-22 with 4:40 to go in the 1st half. UM hung in, and actually got the lead back (31-29) with 2:42 left. Illinois went on another mini-run, 8-3, to lead by 3 at halftime, 37-34.

The 2nd half was all Michigan. UM quickly erased the halftime deficit, and went ahead for good (38-37) with 18:49 left in the game. Illinois hung around, and was within 2 points (48-46) with 13:49 to go, when UM went on a 13-2 run to open up a more comfortable 13 point lead (61-48), with 9:56 left. UM kept the lead in double figures for most of the rest of the game, although Illinois did creep back within 7 points (73-66) with 1:27 left. A 5-2 run by UM finished the game in style. It was a solid, dominating win, and any road win in the Big Ten is a big win.

Michigan had another slow start vs. PSU. They missed their first 4 shots and had a turnover, while PSU made 3 of 6 shots, and it was suddenly 7-0, with 17:12 left in the half. A couple quick 3-pointers by Michigan made it close again (7-6), with 16:16 left, but UM didn't get their first lead until the 13:31 mark, when they went ahead 12-11. That's when it started "raining 3's". Seven 3-pointers later, Michigan had a commanding 41-23 lead, with 5:31 left in the 1st half, and the game was over. Michigan hit 10 3-pointers in the 1st half (on 15 attempts), and led 49-28 at halftime. They cooled off a little in the 2nd half, and only hit 4 more 3-pointers, but Penn State never got any closer than 21 points in the 2nd half. It was another solid, dominating win.

So, what did we learn about this season's UM team this week? A lot! We learned that they may have a true post presence in Donnal, who was deadly in the pick-and-roll game. We learned that they can keep their composure when they have a slow start, both home and away. And finally, we learned that their high-powered offense works against Big Ten teams.

Stats

The [stats for the Illinois game](#) are solid. Michigan shot pretty well overall (30-for-62 = 48.4%), they shot 3-pointers pretty well (10-for-24 = 41.7%), and they shot free throws very well (8-for-10 = 80.0%). They won the rebounding battle convincingly (38-27), but they lost the turnover battle (15-13). Other than the turnovers, those are good numbers for a visiting team.

The [stats for the PSU game](#) are even better. Michigan shot very well overall (29-for-49 = 59.2%), they shot 3-pointers very well (14-for-25 = 56.0%), and they shot free throws pretty well (7-for-11 = 63.6%). They won the rebounding battle (30-28), but lost the turnover battle again (13-11). Once again, other than the turnovers, those are very good numbers.

[Coach Beilein](#) used his regular starting lineup vs. Illinois ([Ricky Doyle](#), [Zak Irvin](#), [Caris LeVert](#), [Duncan Robinson](#), and [Derrick Walton Jr.](#)), but he made a couple changes for the PSU game. LeVert hurt his ankle in the closing minutes of the Illinois game, and he didn't play in the PSU game. He was replaced in the starting lineup by [Muhammad-Ali Abdur-Rahkman](#) (MAAR). After the show Donnal put on at Illinois, Beilein had to start him for the PSU game, and he did, replacing Doyle.

So, let's look at the starters. LeVert was the only starter to hit double figures vs. Illinois, with 22 points (and 10 assists, for a double-double). In the PSU game, Donnal, MAAR, and Irvin all hit double figures: Donnal with 16, MAAR with 14, and Irvin with 16 (and 8 vs. Illinois). The other starters didn't hit double figures in either game: Robinson had 8 and 9 points, Walton had 9 and 6 points, and Doyle had 2 points as a starter vs. Illinois.

The bench chipped in a bunch of points this week, which is very encouraging. Donnal had 26 points off the bench vs. Illinois, [Aubrey Dawkins](#) had 3 and 13 points, [Moritz Wagner](#) had 0 and 4 points, and [DJ Wilson](#) had 1 point in the PSU game, but didn't play in the Illinois game. MAAR came off the bench in the Illinois game, but failed to score. Doyle came off the bench in the PSU game, but failed to score. [Kameron Chatman](#) and [Andrew Dakich](#) both played in the PSU game, but failed to score.

This Week

This week, Michigan continues Big Ten play with just one game. On Thursday (01/07/2016, 7:00 p.m. EST, ESPNU), they play at (#14) [Purdue](#). This will be one of the tougher road games for UM this season. Purdue has a 6'10" guy, a 7'0" guy, and a 7'2" guy. I'm sure they're going to bang it inside every chance they get, and UM's interior defense will really be tested. I will be pleasantly surprised if UM manages to win this one.

Tune by on Thursday, and check back next week to see what happened, and why.

Go Blue!