

Nothing But 'Net – Week #03 – 11/14/2016 – The 2K Classic "Ann Arbor Regional" Games

Quick Look

The University of Michigan men's basketball team played two games last week, and they won both of them. These games were the "Ann Arbor Regional" games for the [2K Classic](#). These games are technically part of the 2K Classic, but they don't affect which teams go to the Championship Round on 11/17 and 11/18. They're just "warm up" games. Anyway, [Michigan beat Howard 76-58 on Friday \(11/11/2016\)](#), then [they beat IUPUI 77-65 on Sunday \(11/13/2016\)](#). Both games were in Crisler Arena. Michigan's record is now 2-0.

What Happened

Michigan won both games, but they didn't look particularly good or sharp in either game. They had a very slow start vs. Howard, missing their first 6 shots, and were down 4-0 at the first media timeout. Once they got going, they traded the lead back and forth for the next few minutes, then they went ahead for good. Michigan led by 9 (34-25) at halftime, but Howard managed to make the game close again in the 2nd half. With 11:14 to go, UM only led by 5 (43-38). A quick 8-0 run by Michigan got the lead back up into double digits, and that's where it stayed for the rest of the game. It was a long, slow, choppy game, with 47 fouls called. It was virtually unwatchable. Here are [the complete stats for the Howard game](#).

The IUPUI game was a little better. At least the refs didn't call 47 fouls (only 32). It was a quicker game, and IUPUI was a better opponent than Howard. The lead went back and forth for most of the 1st half, with IUPUI up by 2 points (32-30) with 4:18 left in the half. Michigan went on a 13-0 run to end the half, and they never looked back. IUPUI stayed within 12-14 points for most of the 2nd half, until UM pushed the lead up to 19 points (77-58) with 1:39 left. IUPUI scored the last 7 points against UM's scrubs to make the score look closer than it was. Here are [the IUPUI stats](#).

Michigan didn't shoot very well in either game (44.4% vs. Howard, 40.9% vs. IUPUI), but they did shoot their free throws very well (23-for-26 vs. Howard, 16-for-18 vs. IUPUI). They barely outrebounded Howard (30-29), but did much better vs. IUPUI (40-31). The biggest improvement so far this season has been blocked shots. Michigan had 4 vs. Howard, and 7 vs. IUPUI.

Who Looked Good

The two senior starters, [Zak Irvin](#) and [Derrick Walton Jr.](#), both had a good week. Zak had 11 and 15 points, and Derrick had 20 and 13. Zak hasn't found his 3-point stroke yet (1-for-6 and 0-for-2), but Derrick has (4-for-7 and 3-for-7). Zak still takes too many long 2-point shots for my taste, but he makes most of them, so I guess I shouldn't complain.

[Moritz Wagner](#) started both games, and he looked pretty good in the Howard game (8 points), and better in the IUPUI game (13 points). He shot 7-for-8 from the free throw line for the week, and had a total of 9 rebounds. Not bad. He still isn't looking very sharp on defense, but he's getting better.

[Muhammad-Ali Abdur-Rahkman](#) didn't play in the exhibition game, due to a minor ankle injury, but he started both games last week, and he looked pretty good. He hit a pair of 3-pointers vs. Howard to get Michigan going early, but that was all the scoring he did in that game. He had 12 points vs. IUPUI. He is still Michigan's best player at driving to the hoop through traffic and finishing strong.

[DJ Wilson](#) had a very good week coming off the bench. He got close to double figures in both games (9 and 7 points), but he contributed in other ways. He had 8 rebounds (3 offensive) vs. Howard, and 14 rebounds (4 offensive) vs. IUPUI. He also had 1 blocked shot vs. Howard, and 5 vs. IUPUI.

[Mark Donnal](#) had a pretty good week coming off the bench. He had 12 points vs. Howard, and 8 vs. IUPUI. He plays better defense than Wagner.

Who Looked Not-So-Good

[Duncan Robinson](#) started both games, but didn't play very well. He is in a major shooting slump from 3-point range, which is usually the strength of his game. He was 1-for-3 vs. Howard, and 1-for-2 vs. IUPUI. Don't be surprised to see Wilson starting in place of him.

[Xavier Simpson](#) looked pretty good in the Howard game (5 points), but didn't do much in the IUPUI game. Can run the offense fairly well, but so far he hasn't shown us any "wow" passes or great decision-making. He's still learning.

[Ibi Watson](#) scored 2 points in each game. He fired up five 3-point attempts between the two games, and missed them all. I expect him to start hitting them soon, and be a 35-40% shooter from 3-point range.

Who Else Played

[Brent Hibbitts](#), [Sean Lonergan](#), [Jon Teske](#), and [Fred Wright-Jones](#) all played in both games, but failed to score. Since Teske burned his redshirt, he's the 3rd string center this season.

Who Didn't Play

[Andrew Dakich](#) hasn't played yet in one exhibition and two real games. I don't know why.

[Austin Davis](#) is apparently being redshirted this season, barring a serious injury to any of the 3 other centers (Wagner, Donnal, and Teske).

The Big Picture

We may have to adjust our expectations for Michigan downward a little for this season. So far, they have underachieved, and they look like they may have chemistry problems. If they play the way they did last week against any of the upper-level Big Ten teams, they'll get blown out. They were way too sloppy and shot way too poorly. Fortunately, they have time to get things straightened out, but we better start seeing improvement soon.

What's Next

This week Michigan plays two games, in the Championship Round of the [2K Classic](#). These games are both in [Madison Square Garden](#), in New York City. On Thursday (11/17/2016, 9:30 p.m., ESPN2), Michigan plays Marquette, then on Friday (11/18/2016, 4:30/6:30 p.m., ESPN2), Michigan plays either SMU or Pittsburgh. Matchups with all 3 of these opponents are toss-ups. We'll know a lot more about this season's team after we see how they do in this tournament.

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

Go Blue!