

Nothing But 'Net – Week #05 – 11/28/2016 – Back Down To Earth

Quick Look

The (#25) University of Michigan men's basketball team played two games last week, and they lost one and won one. [On Wednesday \(11/23/2016\), Michigan lost at South Carolina 61-46](#), then [on Saturday \(11/26/2016\), they beat Mount St. Mary's 64-47](#) in Crisler Arena. The loss and the win leave Michigan with a record of 5-1.

What Happened

It was "back down to Earth" for Michigan. They had looked very good in their two wins the Championship Round of the [2K Classic](#) two weeks ago, good enough that they cracked the AP Top-25. They went to Columbia (SC) for their first true away game, and they looked terrible. They had their worst shooting game in 6 years, and they got blown out. They came back home and beat a decent Mount St. Mary's team a few days later, but the damage was done. Hopefully, Michigan will learn from the South Carolina game, and grow as a team.

The USC game was close for a while, and Michigan led (for the last time) 23-22 with 6:49 left in the 1st half. USC went on an 11-4 run to end the half up 6 points (33-27), and never looked back. Michigan got as close as 8 points (41-33) with 12:04 left in the game, but then USC pushed the lead back up to double digits, and Michigan never really challenged them again.

Michigan lost the USC game because of two things: poor shooting and turnovers. How bad was the shooting? Historically bad. UM shot 19.2% (10-for-52) overall, which is terrible, but much worse from 3-point range: 2-for-26 (7.7%). Ugh. How bad were the turnovers? Michigan came into the game averaging 10 turnovers per game; they had 16 vs. USC. Here are the [stats for the USC game](#).

The MSM game was much better. The score was close in the early going, and MSM led by 4 (12-8) with 16:33 left in the 1st half, when Michigan went on a 25-4 run to end the half up by 17 (33-16). Michigan let MSM hang around for most of the 2nd half, but finally put them away. The lead never got over 19 points, and got as low as 8 points, but UM answered every MSM run. Michigan shot much better in the MSM: 43.6% overall and 40.7% from 3-point range. They also cut down on their turnovers a little: only 12. Here are the [stats for the MSM game](#).

Who Looked Good

[Derrick Walton Jr.](#) was the only Michigan player to hit double figures in both games, with 15 vs. USC and 12 vs. MSM. Of course, he shot terribly vs. USC (3-for-14 overall, and 2-for-9 from 3-point range), but he was the leading scorer for Michigan.

[Mark Donnal](#) was the only other Michigan player in double figures in the ugly USC game, with 10 points. He had 6 vs. MSM. He played good defense in both games.

[Moritz Wagner](#) didn't have a very good game vs. USC, with only 2 free throws in 16 minutes of action, but he did much better vs. MSM, with 13 points, including 3-for-5 shooting 3-pointers.

[Zak Irvin](#) also had a (very) bad game vs. USC, with only 5 points before he fouled out, but he also recovered nicely vs. MSM, with 14 points (and no fouls).

Who Looked Not-So-Good

[DJ Wilson](#) had a great tournament 2 weeks ago in New York, but he didn't do much last week, with 2 points vs. USC and 5 points vs. MSM. He ran around a lot, and played some good defense, but he never seemed in sync with the rest of the team.

[Muhammad-Ali Abdur-Rahkman](#) also had a quiet week: 7 and 5 points.

[Duncan Robinson](#) was another player who had a quiet week: 2 and 8 points.

[Xavier Simpson](#) played in both games, but only scored 2 points vs. USC and 1 point vs. MSM.

[Ibi Watson](#) played in both games, but only scored 1 point vs. USC and no points vs. MSM.

Who Else Played

[Sean Lonergan](#) and [Jon Teske](#) both played in the USC game, but failed to score.

Who Didn't Play

[Brent Hibbitts](#) and [Fred Wright-Jones](#) didn't play in either game.

The Big Picture

This season is turning into a rollercoaster. Two weeks ago, before the 2K Classic, things looked pretty bleak, then the outlook was much sunnier after the tournament, and now things are back to bleak. Michigan looked very dysfunctional vs. USC, and not a lot better vs. MSM. Fortunately, there's still time to get things straightened out.

What's Next

This week Michigan plays two more games, both in Crisler Arena. On Wednesday (11/30/2016, 7:00 p.m., ESPN2), Michigan plays Virginia Tech, then on Saturday (12/03/2016, time TBA, TV TBA), Michigan plays Kennesaw State. The Virginia Tech game is part of the [ACC/Big Ten Challenge](#), and it will be tough. The game vs. Kennesaw State should be much easier.

Come on down to Crisler for the games, and check back next week to see what happened, and why.

Go Blue!