Nothing But 'Net – Week #10 – 01/02/2017 – Disappointing Start

Quick Look

Happy New Year.

The University of Michigan men's basketball team played one game last week, their Big Ten opener, and they lost it. On Sunday (01/01/2017), Michigan lost at Iowa 86-83 (in overtime). The loss drops Michigan's record to 10-4 (0-1 in the Big Ten).

What Happened

This was a toss-up game, and Michigan had their chances to win it, but they couldn't hit the big shots when they needed to, and they lost in overtime. It was a close, hard-fought game, and Michigan didn't look bad, but they also didn't take advantage of the golden opportunities they had to greatly increase their chances.

It was a see-saw game, with lots of ties (11) and lead changes (8), and neither team ever got more than 7 points ahead. Iowa just made the shots and got the stops in the key moments, and they deserved to win.

The stats show that Michigan played OK, but not great: 45.9% shooting overall (34-for74), 34.3% shooting from 3-point range (12-for-35), and 60.0% shooting from the free throw line (3-for-5). They lost the rebounding battle (39-42), and won the turnover battle (8-9).

Who Looked Good

DJ Wilson was the star, and the only reason UM stayed close. He scored 28 points on 11-for-18 shooting (4-for-8 shooting 3-pointers), and had 14 rebounds for a huge double-double. He also had 6 assists and only 1 turnover.

Moritz Wagner scored 12 points on decent shooting: 6-for-10, but 0-for-2 shooting 3-pointers.

Zak Irvin also had 12 points, but didn't shoot very well: 5-for-15. He did have 6 rebounds and 6 assists.

Derrick Walton Jr. was the 4th UM starter in double figures, with 13 points. He also had a mediocre game shooting: 5-for-13, 3-for-8 shooting 3-pointers.

Duncan Robinson, coming off the bench, was the 5th UM player in double figures, with 15 points. He shot pretty well overall (6-for-12), but only 3-for-9 from 3-point range.

Who Looked Not-So-Good

Muhammad-Ali Abdur-Rahkman went scoreless (0-for-2) in only 8 minutes of action. He got in early foul trouble in the 1st half, and only played 4 minutes, but he didn't get any more fouls in the 2nd half, yet only played 4 more minutes. Something is up here. MAAR has been in quite a slump lately, and I suspect he's going to be replaced in the starting lineup with Duncan Robinson.

Mark Donnal chipped in a few points (3) off the bench, and played some decent defense.

Xavier Simpson went scoreless (0-for-1) in 9 minutes of playing time.

Sean Lonergan went scoreless (0-for-1) in 1 minute of playing time.

Who Else Played

No one else played.

Who Didn't Play

Brent Hibbitts, Jon Teske, Ibi Watson and Fred Wright-Jones didn't play.

The Big Picture

It's clear that Michigan isn't going to be in the running for the Big Ten championship, so they need to set their sights on getting to the NCAA Tournament. They won 10 non-conference games, including a couple good wins (Marquette, SMU, and Texas) and no bad losses, so they need to win 9 games in the Big Ten regular season, and 1 game in the Big Ten Tournament. The Iowa game could have been one of those 9 wins, but it wasn't. Michigan still stands a decent chance of making the NCAA Tournament, but they need to win a few games on the road.

What's Next

This week Michigan plays two games, both in Crisler Arena. On Wednesday (01/04/2017, 8:30 p.m., BTN), Michigan plays Penn State, then on Saturday (01/07/2017, 3:10 p.m., ESPN2), they play Maryland.

Penn State went 8-5 in their non-conference schedule, with a couple good wins (Georgia Tech and St. John's), and one sad loss (Albany). They lost to Northwestern at home, and beat Rutgers on the road. Michigan should be able to beat them, but they'll have to play a solid game.

Maryland went 12-1 in their non-conference schedule, with their only loss at home to Pittsburgh in the ACC/Big Ten Challenge. They beat Illinois at home, but lost to Nebraska, also at home. They are the first team out of the AP Top-25 (#26). They will be a tough test for Michigan, and a win would be an accomplishment.

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

Go Blue!