

Nothing But 'Net – Week #15 – 02/06/2017 – Season On The Brink

Quick Look

The University of Michigan men's basketball team only played one game last week, and they lost it. [On Saturday \(02/04/2017\), Michigan lost to Ohio State 70-66](#) in Crisler Arena. The loss drops Michigan's record to 14-9 (4-6 in the Big Ten).

What Happened

This was a "must win" game for Michigan, and they didn't win it, so their season is now officially "on the brink". They have 8 games left, and they need to win 6 of them to stand a chance of making the NCAA Tournament. Unfortunately, the OSU game was probably the most winnable of their remaining games, and they couldn't win it. I'm afraid we're looking at an NIT bid this season.

Michigan started the OSU game strong, then slowly let the game get away from them. They had an 11-point lead (19-8) with 14:03 left in the 1st half; 90 seconds later, the lead was down for 3 points (19-16). UM managed to push the lead back up to 8 points (30-22) with 5:17 left in the half, then they fell apart. They let OSU go on a 14-5 run to lead by 1 point at halftime, 36-35.

OSU started pulling away in the 2nd half, but Michigan had one last surge left in them. OSU led by 8 (47-39) with 14:46 left in the game, before UM came back to within 2 points (49-47) with 11:41 to go. OSU pushed the lead back up to 8 (58-50) with 7:07 left, then UM got it tied up (60-60) with 4:23 to go. It was tied up again (63-63) with 2:23 left, but OSU made their free throws, and Michigan missed their shots, and Michigan let another winnable game slip away.

The [stats](#) are miserable. Michigan shot poorly overall (19-for-51 = 37.3%), they shot 3-pointers poorly (13-for-35 = 37.1%), but they did shoot free throws well (15-for-18 = 83.3%). They were absolutely hammered on the boards (42-24), but they did win the turnover battle (12-16). The main reason they lost was rebounding, especially offensive rebounding. OSU had a whopping 16 offensive rebounds. It was terrible.

Who Looked Good

[Derrick Walton Jr.](#) has been on a tear lately, and he was one of the few bright spots in a dismal game. He scored 25 points, including 6-for-9 shooting from 3-point range. He also had 10 rebounds, for another double-double. He needs more help.

[Muhammad-Ali Abdur-Rahkman](#) did his best, and it was pretty good, but it wasn't enough. He scored 12 points, and had 7 rebounds. He played hard.

[DJ Wilson](#) was the only other Michigan player in double figures, with 11 points. He had one rebound. Think about that: 2 of Michigan's guards combined for 17 rebounds, Wilson had one.

Who Looked Not-So-Good

[Moritz Wagner](#) couldn't stay on the floor. He fouled out in only 22 minutes, after scoring 5 points in the 1st half, and 0 points in the 2nd half. He also had exactly one rebound.

[Zak Irvin](#) did a little better than his last game (0 points vs. MSU, when he was sick with the flu), but not much. He scored 5 points in the first 5 minutes, then was held scoreless the rest of the game. He shot 2-for-10 (1-for-6 from 3-point range), and had as many turnovers (3) as rebounds (3).

[Duncan Robinson](#) almost hit double figures (8 points), on 2-for-6 shooting, all from 3-point range. He had a rough time on defense.

[Mark Donnal](#) had to play a lot more than usual, since Wagner was in foul trouble for most of the game. He responded with 0 points and one rebound.

[Xavier Simpson](#) played for 4 minutes, didn't attempt a shot, didn't get a rebound, but did get 2 steals.

Who Else Played

No one else played.

Who Didn't Play

[Brent Hibbitts](#), [Sean Lonergan](#), [Jon Teske](#), [Ibi Watson](#), and [Fred Wright-Jones](#) didn't play.

The Big Picture

The bubble has popped. It would take a minor miracle for Michigan to make it to the NCAA Tournament now. They should just worry about staying above 0.500 so they can go to the NIT.

What's Next

This week Michigan plays two games again, one in Crisler and one on the road. On Tuesday (02/07/2017, 9:00 p.m., ESPN), they play Michigan State in Crisler Arena, then on Sunday (02/12/2017, 1:00 p.m., CBS), they play at Indiana.

Michigan just played MSU 2 weeks ago (Sunday 01/29/2017) in East Lansing, and almost pulled off the road upset. This is another "toss up" game, and it is a game that Michigan needs to win if they want to salvage anything from this season.

Michigan also played Indiana 2 weeks ago (Thursday 01/26/2017) in Crisler Arena, and thrashed them soundly. If they could beat IU by 30 points (90-60) at home, they should be able to beat them by at least one point on the road, but Michigan still hasn't won a true road game this season, so expect another nail-biter.

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

Go Blue!