

## Nothing But 'Net – Week #17 – 02/20/2017 – Big Win, Ugly Loss

### Quick Look

The University of Michigan men's basketball team played two games last week, and they won one and lost the other. [On Thursday \(02/16/2017\), Michigan beat \(#11\) Wisconsin 64-58](#) in Crisler Arena, then [on Sunday \(02/19/2017\), they lost at Minnesota 83-78](#), in overtime. The win and the loss leave Michigan with a record of 17-10 (7-7 in the Big Ten).

### What Happened

As impressive as the win over Wisconsin was, the loss to Minnesota was just as unimpressive. Michigan played tough, smart basketball vs. Wisconsin, and they played miserable, mistake-ridden basketball vs. Minnesota. They deserved to win the Wisconsin game, and they deserved to lose the Minnesota game. Michigan has had a tough time playing with any composure on the road, except for the one win at Indiana.

The Wisconsin game was very exciting. Neither team ever got more than 9 points ahead, and it came right down to the last minute. After winning both games (MSU and Indiana) 2 weeks ago without ever trailing, Michigan started the Wisconsin game with an early 8-2 lead, and stayed ahead until the 12:17 mark, when Wisconsin went ahead 11-10. The lead went back and forth, with Wisconsin leading by 1 point (31-30) at halftime. The first 2 and a half minutes of the 2<sup>nd</sup> half were a disaster. Wisconsin went on a 7-0 run, to push the lead up to 8 points (38-30), and it looked like the game was about to slip away, but Michigan didn't give up. They fought back hard, and managed to tie the game up (42-42) with 12:12 left. It was still tied (47-47) with 7:53 to go, when [Muhammad-Ali Abdur-Rahkman](#) hit a huge 3-pointer from the corner and was fouled, giving him a rare 4-point play. Wisconsin never got any closer than 4 points the rest of the game.

The Minnesota game was depressing. Michigan played from behind almost the entire game, and whenever they did manage to scratch out a small lead, they gave it back quickly. Foul trouble and turnovers hurt them all game, and the stretches of cold shooting came at just the wrong times. This was a "momentum" game, and Michigan kept giving Minnesota the momentum, which kept the crowd in it. The game was close the whole way, with neither team ever getting a double-digit lead. Minnesota led by 2 at halftime (29-27), and it looked like they were going to win in regulation when they were up 8 points (68-60) with only 2:54 left in the game. They were still up 6 points (70-64) with 1:17 left, when Michigan went on an 8-2 run to end the half, and tie it up. The big shot was a long 3-pointer by [DJ Wilson](#) with 2 seconds left to tie the game and send it to overtime. Overtime didn't go well, and a winnable game was lost.

The big story in the Minnesota game was lousy officiating, and too much of it. Which team was better? We'll never know, since the refs took over and made it about them. Minnesota shot an incredible 41 free throws! The worst segment was when they called a phantom foul on [Derrick Walton Jr.](#), then "TV" Teddy Valentine just stared at the Michigan bench, hoping for a reaction he could call a technical on. He got it, and called a tech on the bench from 40 feet away. It was another "momentum" moment.

The [stats for the Wisconsin game](#) are decent. Michigan didn't shoot very well overall (23-for-50 = 46.0%), they didn't shoot 3-pointers very well (9-for-23 = 39.1%), and they didn't shoot free throws very well (9-for-13 = 69.2%). They lost the rebounding battle (35-29), but they (barely) won the turnover battle (10-11). The big difference in this game was that UM made 9 3-pointers, and Wisconsin only made 3 (on 16 attempts).

The [stats for the Minnesota game](#) are ugly. Overall shooting was pretty good (30-for-60 = 50.0%), but 3-point shooting was bad (9-for-26 = 34.6%), and free throw shooting was absolutely terrible (9-for-18 = 50.0%). Michigan got hammered on the boards (44-31), but they did (barely) win the turnover battle (9-11). The game was lost at the free throw line. Michigan came into the game as the #1 team in the nation at free throw percentage.

## Who Looked Good

[Moritz Wagner](#) played hard in both games, with 21 and 15 points. He had foul trouble in the poorly-called Minnesota game, which limited his effectiveness.

[Muhammad-Ali Abdur-Rahkman](#) had 12 and 14 points, many on fearless drives into heavy traffic.

[Zak Irvin](#) finally broke out of his slump. He didn't have a great week, but he did finally score some points: 18 vs. Wisconsin and 10 vs. Minnesota.

[Derrick Walton Jr.](#) had a mediocre game vs. Wisconsin (5 points), but bounced back with 16 points vs. Minnesota. He was uncharacteristically bad shooting free throws (1-for-4) vs. Minnesota.

[DJ Wilson](#) also had a weak game vs. Wisconsin (2 points), and bounced back vs. Minnesota (16 points).

## Who Looked Not-So-Good

[Duncan Robinson](#) had a quiet week, with 6 and 5 points.

[Xavier Simpson](#) played in both games, but failed to score.

[Mark Donnal](#) had a very quiet week, with 0 and 2 points. He did play some good defense, and gave Wagner a long rest in the Wisconsin game.

[Jon Teske](#) played for 2 minutes in the Wisconsin game, and it was a disaster. The Wisconsin big men went right at him, and he was helpless. He didn't play in the Minnesota game.

## Who Else Played

No one else played this week. They were both tight games, and [Coach Beilein](#) stuck to a short bench.

## Who Didn't Play

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

## The Big Picture

The win over Wisconsin really helped Michigan's chances of making the NCAA Tournament, and their loss at Minnesota hurt those chances a little. Michigan can still solidify their spot in the Big Dance with 2 more wins in the last 4 games, and one win in the Big Ten Tournament. Unfortunately, 3 of those 4 regular season games are on the road, where UM has had a rough time.

## What's Next

This week Michigan plays two games again, one on the road and one in Crisler. On Wednesday (02/22/2017, 6:30 p.m., BTN), they play at [Rutgers](#), then on Saturday (02/25/2017, 4:00 p.m., ESPN2), they play (#16) [Purdue](#) in Crisler.

Michigan only plays Rutgers once this season, and it's on the road. Rutgers is still the worst team in the Big Ten, but they're getting better. They are currently 13-15 overall, but only 2-13 in Big Ten play. They haven't beaten anybody good, and all their losses are predictable. Given Michigan's poor play on the road, I expect a nailbiter.

This is also the only time Michigan plays Purdue this season. Purdue is currently 22-5 overall, 11-3 in the Big Ten. They are tied for 1<sup>st</sup> place in the league. They have some impressive wins (Notre Dame, Wisconsin, Michigan State [twice], and Maryland), and a couple puzzling losses (Minnesota, Iowa, and Nebraska). They are tall and talented, but they are beatable. It's Senior Night for Michigan, and they'd sure like to send the seniors out with a big upset.

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

Go Blue!