

Nothing But 'Net – Week #03 – 11/13/2017 – A Slow Start

Quick Look

The University of Michigan men's basketball team played one game last week, and they won it. [On Saturday \(11/11/2017\), UM beat North Florida 86-66 in Crisler Arena](#). Michigan's record is now 1-0.

What Happened

The final score looks like a pretty comfortable win, but the game was close for the whole 1st half, and well into the 2nd half. Once Michigan pulled away, they finally looked good, but it was a very slow start.

Michigan took an early 7-2 lead, then went stone cold. UNF went on a 16-4 run, and led 18-11 with 10:18 left in the 1st half. Michigan looked very sloppy and lethargic. They went on their own 8-0 run to lead again, 19-18, with 6:35 to go. The teams then traded baskets for the rest of the half, with UM leading 32-30 at halftime. It was not a very impressive 1st half.

Michigan came out of halftime with a little more energy, and quickly pushed the lead up to 7 points (37-30) with 19:08 left in the game. They couldn't put UNF away, and let them hang around. UNF kept battling, and reclaimed the lead, 47-46, with 12:49 to go. That was their last lead, as Michigan finally woke up and pulled away for good. The lead got as large as 23 points, before ending up at 20 points. The last 10 minutes were encouraging, but the first 30 minutes were depressing.

Stats

[The game statistics](#) aren't very impressive. Michigan didn't shoot very well overall (33-for-71 = 46.5%), they didn't shoot 3-pointers very well (9-for-25 = 36.0%), and they didn't shoot free throws very well (11-for-16 = 68.8%). By comparison, UNF shot 60.0% (9-for-15) from 3-point range. Michigan barely won the rebounding battle (36-34), but they crushed UNF in the turnover department (24-10). That's what won the game.

Who Looked Good

The starters were [Muhammad-Ali Abdur-Rahkman](#), [Charles Matthews](#), [Duncan Robinson](#), [Zavier Simpson](#), and [Moritz Wagner](#). Three of them hit double figures.

Robinson was the high scorer, with 21 points. He shot 7-for-13 overall, and 4-for-7 from 3-point range. He also had 7 rebounds and 3 assists. He even played some good defense. It was a good game for him.

Matthews scored 20 points in his first "real" game as a Wolverine (the stats from the exhibition game don't count). He shot OK (9-for-19 overall, 1-for-3 from 3-point range), but he missed several short, easy shots that I expect him to make as the season progresses.

The 3rd starter in double figures was Wagner, with 18 points and (a career-high) 12 rebounds, for a very nice double-double. Moe didn't shoot particularly well (8-for-17, 0-for-3 from 3-point range), but he played hard for most of the game.

Simpson didn't score much (3 points), but he did run the offense pretty well (9 assists), and he played some tough defense.

Who Looked Not-So-Good

MAAR didn't do much out there. He scored 5 points on terrible shooting (1-for-5 overall, 1-for-2 from 3-point range) and grabbed 4 rebounds, but he wasn't a factor in the win.

[Jaaron Simmons](#) played 10 minutes, and only scored 2 points on free throws.

[Eli Brooks](#) didn't do much with his 14 minutes of playing time. He scored 2 points on 1-for-4 shooting.

Who Else Played

12 of the 16 players on the roster got to play, and all 12 of them scored.

[Austin Davis](#) only played 2 minutes, but he made the most of them with 3 points.

[Isaiah Livers](#) hit his only 3-point attempt.

[Jordan Poole](#) only played for the last 3 minutes, in "garbage time", but made the most of it with 2 points.

[Jon Teske](#) played 7 minutes, and scored 2 points.

[Ibi Watson](#) played 9 minutes, and scored 5 points, including a 3-pointer.

Who Didn't Play

The scout team players, [Brent Hibbitts](#), [Naji Ozeir](#) and [Luke Wilson](#), didn't get to play.

There's also a new player on the roster: [C.J. Baird](#), a 6'5", 220 pound freshman forward. He didn't get to play either.

The Big Picture

Michigan didn't look very good for much of the game. They've got a couple more overmatched opponents before the level of competition picks up. They need to fix a few things before the tough games start.

The biggest problem that Michigan has to fix is the lack of perimeter threats. The reason that last season's team was so successful was that they could put out a lineup with 5 legitimate threats to hit 3-pointers: Derrick Walton Jr., DJ Wilson, Moe Wagner, Zak Irvin, and Duncan Robinson. That kept the defenders out of the middle, and opened it up for pick-and-roll and isolation drive plays. With Walton, Wilson, and Irvin all gone, they only have 3 players (Wagner, Robinson, and Matthews) that are threats to shoot 3-pointers. Simpson can hit the deep ball, but he's so "pass first" right now that he passes up wide open shots. MAAR can also hit 3-pointers, but he also appears to be gun-shy about shooting. With only 3 threats, opposing defenses can pack the middle a lot more. Simpson and MAAR need to start shooting (and making) 3-pointers.

Predicted Win Total

New this season: each week I'll update the Predicted Win Total for the regular season, based on how well UM played that week, taking into account how the remaining opponents are doing and any injuries.

This week's Predicted Win Total is: **19**

I didn't see anything to change my guesses for "Should Win", "Should Lose", and "Toss Up" games.

Here's a chart of the Predicted Win Totals for each week:

| Week | Date | Predicted Win Total |
|------|------------|---------------------|
| 1 | 10/30/2017 | 19 |
| 3 | 11/13/2017 | 19 |

What's Next

This week Michigan plays two games, both at home. On Monday (11/13/2017, 7:00 p.m., BTN), Michigan plays [Central Michigan](#), then on Thursday (11/16/2017, 7:00 p.m., BTN Plus), Michigan plays [Southern Mississippi](#).

These are both games that Michigan should win, but they'll have to play better than they did vs. North Florida. CMU was 16-16 last season, with no impressive wins. They don't have a particularly intimidating roster, although they do have quite a few juniors and seniors. SMU was 9-22 last season, with no impressive wins. They do have one 6'11" dude on their roster, and a bunch of juniors, but no seniors at all.

Come on down to Crisler Arena to see how they do, and check back next week.

Go Blue!