

Nothing But 'Net – Week #07 – 12/11/2017 – A Tale Of Two Collapses

Quick Look

The University of Michigan men's basketball team played two games last week, and they lost one and won one. [On Monday \(12/04/2017\), they lost at Ohio State 71-62](#), then [on Saturday \(12/09/2017\), they beat UCLA 78-69 \(overtime\) in Crisler Arena](#). Michigan's record is now 8-3 (1-1 in the Big Ten).

What Happened

Both games featured big collapses, one bad and one good. In the OSU game, Michigan was cruising along with a 20-point lead (43-23) with 1:31 left in the 1st half, when they collapsed. They allowed a 7-0 OSU run to end the half, then allowed a 19-3 OSU run to start the 2nd half. Even though Michigan eventually managed to end the run, and even got a small lead again, the collapse gave OSU the momentum, and OSU ended the game with an 11-2 run. It was very depressing.

On the other hand, the UCLA collapse was great fun to watch. UCLA led by 15 points (46-31) with 14:48 left, when they collapsed. Michigan went on a 22-10 run to pull within 3 points (56-53) with 5:12 to go, and they tied the game up with 10.9 left. UM finally started hitting 3-pointers in overtime, and led for the whole overtime period. It was an important win. If Michigan had lost that game, the whole season was in danger of going down the drain.

Stats

[The statistics for the OSU game](#) are pretty ugly. Michigan shot poorly overall (22-for-59 = 37.3%), they shot 3-pointers poorly (8-for-28 = 28.6%), but they did shoot free throws decently (10-for-14 = 71.4%). They lost the rebounding battle (35-32), but they won the turnover battle (8-10). When UM shoots 3-pointers poorly, they usually lose.

[The statistics for the UCLA game](#) are better than the OSU game, but still not very good. Michigan shot decently overall (30-for-64 = 46.9%), they shot 3-pointers decently (10-for-29 = 34.5%), but they shot free throws terribly (8-for-22 = 36.4%). They got thrashed on the boards (41-30), but they won the turnover battle big-time (11-20). Michigan could have won this game in regulation with even mediocre free-throw shooting. They were lucky to force overtime. Fortunately, they played their best basketball in the overtime period.

Who Looked Good

The starters for both games were [Muhammad-Ali Abdur-Rahkman](#), [Eli Brooks](#), [Charles Matthews](#), [Duncan Robinson](#), and [Moritz Wagner](#).

Of the 5 starters, only one hit double figures in both games: Wagner had 14 and 23 points. He almost had a double-double vs. OSU (9 rebounds).

The only other player to hit double figures in both games was very surprising: [Zavier Simpson](#) had 11 and 15 points. After scoring 3 points or less in almost every other game this season (he did have 13 points vs. Central Michigan way back in early November), he exploded in back to back games. He had several huge baskets vs. UCLA, including a couple crucial 3-pointers.

Two other starters hit double figures in one game this week: MAAR (11 and 8 points), and Matthews (4 and 20 points). MAAR also hit two timely 3-pointers vs. UCLA, but the real sparkplug in the UCLA game was Matthews. He had a quiet 1st half (4 points), but took over the game when UCLA got up by 15 points. He had a personal 8-1 run, to get UM back in the game. He could have been even better, but his free-throw shooting abandoned him: he was 2-for-10 at the line.

Even though he didn't hit double figures in either game, Brooks had a good week, with 8 and 7 points. However, if Simpson keeps playing like he did this week, Brooks could lose his starting job. It's nice to have a competition where both players are playing very well, rather than a choice between two struggling players.

Once again, [Jon Teske](#) managed to have a good week without scoring many points (3 and 2 points). He does a better job at defending against strong centers than Wagner, and he's a better rebounder than Wagner. He isn't the offensive threat that Wagner is, but he can "hold the fort" while Wagner is resting, or in foul trouble.

Who Looked Not-So-Good

After a few big games, [Jordan Poole](#) has cooled down (5 and 1 points). He was 0-for-3 from 3-point range in each game this week.

[Isaiah Livers](#) didn't have a bad week, but it was a step back from where he's been the previous few weeks. He played in both games this week, but he failed to score. He did have 3 and 7 rebounds, and he played some good defense.

[Jaaron Simmons](#) played briefly in both games, but failed to score. He's falling further and further behind Brooks and Simpson.

[Ibi Watson](#) hit a 3-pointer vs. OSU, but didn't play in the UCLA game. He's in danger of falling off the end of the bench.

Who Else Played

No one else played. The bench is shortening up as the games are getting tougher.

Who Didn't Play

[Austin Davis](#) is falling off the end of the bench. He didn't play in either game.

The bench players ([C.J. Baird](#), [Brent Hibbitts](#), [Naji Ozeir](#), and [Luke Wilson](#)) didn't play in either game.

The Big Picture

The OSU loss was one of the more depressing losses in recent memory, except for the NJIT game a few years ago. Sure, it's tough to win on the road in the Big Ten, but a 20-point lead near halftime should be a lot harder to throw away. The UCLA game could have been a season-ending disaster, but Michigan clawed their way back into the game, overcoming some horrendous free-throw shooting. Still, the results this week don't exactly inspire great confidence.

Predicted Win Total

Both games this week were of the "toss up" variety, and splitting them is reasonable. This doesn't do anything to change my feelings about the Predicted Win Total.

This week's Predicted Win Total is: **16**

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

4	11/20/2017	16
5	11/27/2017	16
6	12/04/2017	16
7	12/11/2017	16

What's Next

This week Michigan plays two games, both away from Crisler Arena. On Tuesday (12/12/2017, 9:00 p.m. EST, ESPN2), Michigan plays at [Texas](#), then on Saturday (12/16/2017, 12:00 p.m., ESPN), Michigan plays [Detroit](#) in [Little Caesars Arena](#) in Detroit.

Texas is currently 6-2, with a win over a common opponent (VCU) and 2 understandable losses to ranked teams. It's going to be a tough game, especially on the road.

The game vs. Detroit is the first half of a college basketball doubleheader. The other game is Michigan State vs. Oakland. The doubleheader is being billed as the [Hitachi College Basketball Showcase](#). These are the first college basketball games to be played in the new arena.

Detroit is currently 4-6, with no impressive wins and several embarrassing losses (Wayne State [exhibition], Seattle, Fort Wayne, Toledo, and Western Michigan). They have also played a common opponent (UCLA), and they got thumped (106-73). Michigan should win this one, but it may not be easy. Even though the game is being played on a neutral court, it will feel like an away game, with a large anti-Michigan crowd there for the 2nd game.

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

Go Blue!