Nothing But 'Net – Week #10 – 01/01/2018 – End Of The Non-Conference Schedule & Mid-Term Grades

Happy New Year. Let's hope 2018 is a good year for Michigan athletics.

Quick Look

The University of Michigan men's basketball team played one game last week, and they won it. On Saturday (12/30/2017), they beat Jacksonville 76-51 in Crisler Arena. The win raises Michigan's record to 12-3 (1-1 in the Big Ten).

What Happened

This was the last of the "guarantee" games for Michigan, and they played well enough to win, but not well enough to dominate. The game started out slow and sloppy, with more turnovers than made baskets. Michigan never trailed, but they only led by 4 points (11-7) with 10:52 left in the 1st half. They finally pushed the lead into double digits (21-9) with 7:30 to go in the half, and never let it get below 10 points the rest of the game. The lead was 14 at halftime (32-18), and stayed in the 13-15 point range for the first 8:00 of the 2nd half. At that point, UM started pulling away, and kept the lead up over 20 points for the last 8:00 of the game.

Stats

The stats for the game are reasonable, but certainly not dominating. Michigan shot pretty well overall (31-for-55 = 56.4%), they shot 3-pointers fairly well (8-for-23 = 34.8%), and they shot free throws OK (6-for-9 = 66.7%). They lost the turnover battle (14-9), which very rarely happens, but they really won the rebounding battle (41-23).

Who Looked Good

The starters were Muhammad-Ali Abdur-Rahkman, Eli Brooks, Charles Matthews, Duncan Robinson, and Moritz Wagner.   Jon Teske had been starting in place of Wagner, who missed 2 games with a foot injury he sustained in the Texas game.

MAAR was the high scorer for Michigan, with 20 points. He was perfect from the floor (7-for-7 overall, 2-for-2 from 3-point range), and he even had 3 rebounds and 2 assists.

Matthews also had a good game, with 18 points, including a couple thunderous dunks. He was Michigan's leading rebounder, with 7.

The other starter in double figures was Robinson, with 12 points. He didn't shoot particularly well (5-for-10 overall, 2-for-6 from 3-point range), but he had some timely baskets.

The only other Michigan player in double figures was Jordan Poole, with 10 points. Of course, 8 of those 10 points were scored in the last 4:00, during "garbage time", but they all count.

Who Looked Not-So-Good

Wagner looked rusty and hesitant out there. He played 20 minutes, and only scored 7 points, the only time he hasn't hit double figures this season. He also had a season-high 4 turnovers.

Brooks had another 0 point game, his 5th so far this season. In the last 4 games, he has scored 0, 4, 0, and 0 points.

The backup point guard, Zavier Simpson, didn't do much better. He scored 2 points, but he did have 5 assists.

Teske had a quiet game, with 2 points and 6 rebounds.

Isaiah Livers didn't do much with his 12 minutes off the bench: 2 points.

Jaaron Simmons played 3 minutes, and failed to score. He continues to slide down the bench.

Who Else Played

Austin Davis only played 3 minutes, and failed to score.

Ibi Watson played 4 minutes, and scored 3 points.

Who Didn't Play

None of the practice squad players (C.J. Baird, Brent Hibbitts, Naji Ozeir, Rico Ozuna-Harrison, and Luke Wilson) played in this game.

The Big Picture

After 2 dominating wins over inferior opponents (Detroit and Alabama A&M), it was discouraging to see Michigan muddle through an uninspired win over another opponent they should have crushed. Chalk it up to rust (they had 9 days off between games) and a Christmas break "hangover".

Predicted Win Total

Michigan won a "Should Win" game, so the Predicted Win Total doesn't change.

This week's Predicted Win Total is: 18

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
8	12/18/2017	18
9	12/25/2017	18
10	01/01/2018	18

Mid-Term Grades

With 15 games down, and at least 16 more to go, it's time for mid-term grades.

<u>Freshman Eligibility</u>

C.J. Baird (Inc.) – C.J. is a practice squad player. He's played in 2 games, and has scored 2 points.

Eli Brooks (C+) – Eli has played in all 15 games this season, and started the last 11. He has scored 52 points (3.5 pts/game), and has 26 assists. He hasn't been bad, but he hasn't been that good either. He tends to disappear out there.

Austin Davis (C-) – Austin has played in 8 games, all off the bench, and has scored 15 points (1.9 pts/game). He still looks slightly dazed when he's out there, like the game is still going

too fast for him. He has plenty of potential, and good tools, he just needs to put it all together.

Isaiah Livers (C+) – Isaiah has played in all 15 games this season, all off the bench, and has scored 45 points (3.0 pts/game). He plays hard when he's out there, and he shows flashes of why he was Mr. Basketball in Michigan last season, but he's still learning the college game. He shoots too many 3-pointers for the percentage he makes (6-for-21 = 28.6%).

Naji Ozeir (Inc.) – Naji is a practice squad player. He's played in 2 games, and has scored 2 points.

Rico Ozuna-Harrison (Inc.) – Rico is a practice squad player. He's played in 1 game, and hasn't scored yet.

Jordan Poole (B-) – Jordan has played in 13 of the 15 games so far this season, all off the bench. He has scored 82 points (6.3 pts/game), and is shooting a pretty good percentage from 3-point range (15-for-39 = 38.5%). He plays hard when he's out there, but he still makes some dumb freshman mistakes. Once he cleans that up, he'll be a very valuable player on this team.

Luke Wilson (Inc.) – Luke is a practice squad player. He's played in 2 games, and hasn't scored yet.

Sophomore Eligibility

Brent Hibbitts (Inc.) – Brent is a practice squad player. He's played in 5 games, and has scored 9 points. Brent was redshirted his freshman season, and is a redshirt sophomore.

Charles Matthews (A) – Finally, an "A"! Charles has been very good this season, starting all 15 games, and leading the team in scoring (242 points, 16.1 pts/game). He is also the 2nd leading rebounder (77), and 2nd on the team in assists (48) and blocked shots (9). He is very athletic and acrobatic, with excellent body control. It's fun to watch him play when he decides to take over a game. Charles was redshirted last season, due to transfer rules, and is a redshirt sophomore.

Zavier Simpson (B-) – Zavier was the starting point guard for the first 4 games, before Coach Beilein switched to Eli Brooks. He has played in all 15 games, and has scored 67 points (4.5 pts/game). He is shooting a nice percentage from 3-point range (9-for-21 = 42.9%), and is 3rd on the team in assists (42). He is a better defender than Brooks, and I'm kind of surprised that he hasn't won back the starting point guard position.

Jon Teske (B-) – Jon has played in all 15 games this season, and started 2 of them, when Wagner was injured. He has scored 67 points (4.5 pts/game), and leads the team in blocked shots (11). He has been fine in his role as the backup center, and he looks a little more confident out there compared to last season.

Ibi Watson (C-) – Ibi has played in 14 of the 15 games this season, all off the bench, and has scored 46 points (3.3 pts/game). When he's in the game, his role is to shoot 3-pointers, and he's done that pretty well (9-for-22 = 40.9%). He just can't seem to get off the bench very often.

Junior Eligibility

Moritz Wagner (B) – This season has been a little disappointing for Moe, especially compared to last season. He's played in 13 of the 15 games so far, all as a starter, but he missed 2 games with a foot injury. He's 2nd on the team in scoring (194 points, 14.9 pts/game), and he leads the team in rebounds (97). He has shown flashes of the brilliance he showed last season, especially in post-season play, but he has had long stretches of mediocre play. He has also been victimized on defense pretty often, and has given way to Teske for defensive

reasons. If he can regain the magic he had at the end of last season, he can take Michigan far.

<u>Senior Eligibility</u>

[Muhammad-Ali Abdur-Rahkman](#) (A-) – The only other "A" at this point. MAAR has started all 15 games, and is 3rd on the team in scoring (159 points, 10.6 pts/game). He's shooting a decent percentage from 3-point range (24-for-62 = 38.7%), and he's tied for the lead in free-throw percentage (21-for-24 = 87.5%). He has been pretty steady out there, and has played some good defense, but he's been a quiet leader on a team that might occasionally need some firing up.

[Duncan Robinson](#) (B) – Duncan has started all 15 games this season, and he's the 4th leading scorer (156 points, 10.4 pts/game). His role is clear: he's the designated main 3-point gunner, and he's been a little off this season. His 3-point shooting percentage is decent (34-for-91 = 37.4%), but we know that he's capable of shooting 50-60%, not 37.4%. He had a terrible shooting slump for 3-4 games, but he appears to have broken out of it. If he can get his 3-point stroke back, he can take this team to the next level.

[Jaaron Simmons](#) (D) – Jaaron was supposed to be the starting point guard on this team. He has failed miserably. He has played in 13 games, all off the bench, and has scored 15 points (1.2 pts/game). At this point, it makes more sense to give most of the minutes to the two point guards of the future, Brooks and Simpson.

What's Next

This week Michigan plays two games, both in the Big Ten. On Tuesday (01/02/2018, 7:00 p.m. EST, ESPN2), Michigan plays at [Iowa](#), then on Saturday (01/06/2018, 12:00 p.m., BTN), they play [Illinois](#) in Crisler Arena.

Iowa is currently 9-6 (0-2 in the Big Ten), with no impressive wins, and a couple embarrassing losses (Louisiana and South Dakota State on a neutral court). It's hard to win on the road in the Big Ten, so this will be a challenging game, but Michigan stands a good chance.

Illinois is currently 10-5 (0-2 in the Big Ten), with one decent win (Missouri), and one embarrassing loss (Eastern Illinois, in their exhibition game). They lost both of their early Big Ten games in overtime. This should be a close game, but Michigan should be favored at home.

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

Go Blue!