

Nothing But 'Net – Week #17 – 02/19/2018 – A Great Last Week At Home

Quick Look

The (#22) University of Michigan men's basketball team played two games last week, and they won both of them. [On Wednesday \(02/14/2018\), they beat Iowa 74-59](#) in Crisler Arena, then [on Sunday \(02/18/2018\), they beat \(#8\) Ohio State 74-62](#), also in Crisler Arena. The 2 wins raise Michigan's record to 22-7 (11-5 in the Big Ten).

What Happened

These two games were Michigan's last two home games of this season, and they were a great way to finish the home schedule. Michigan ended up 15-1 at home this season, with the lone loss coming on a controversial (read: miserable) last-second call by a trio of inept Big Ten refs vs. Purdue. Michigan would have won that game with competent officiating, but 15-1 is still a great record.

Michigan was a strong favorite in the Iowa game, and they took care of business, but the game against OSU was a toss-up, and it was a solid, impressive victory.

The Iowa game started as so many UM games have this season: slowly. In less than two and half minutes, Michigan was already down 7-0, with one missed shot and three turnovers. Michigan finally got going, and went on a quick 12-4 run to take the lead, 12-11, with 14:53 left in the 1st half. Iowa got the lead back for the last time, 14-12, then it was all Michigan. They went ahead for good (17-14) at the 12:23 mark, and never trailed again. The Michigan lead got as high as 13 points (37-24) in the 1st half, right at halftime, and as high as 18 points (66-48) with 5:33 left in the game. It was a solid, straightforward win over an overmatched opponent.

The OSU game was very exciting. It was Senior Day, and Crisler Arena was sold out. Other games have been officially listed as "sold out" (attendance = 12707), but this one had a butt in almost every seat. It was a good crowd, and one of the louder crowds in the last few years, and Michigan gave them something to be loud about. UM played hard and smart, they hustled and scrapped, and they controlled the game.

A few words about Andrew Dakich: after being on Michigan's team for 4 years and redshirting his senior year, he graduated and went to Ohio State for his "grad transfer" year. While he was liked when he was at Michigan, the crowd wasn't willing to forgive him for his poor choice in grad schools. They booed every single time his name was announced, and they booed every single time he touched the ball. They held their breath all 3 times he drove to the basket for what looked like a sure layup, and they cheered wildly all 3 times when he missed. He ended up with 0 points, 0 assists, 1 turnover, and 1 foul in 22 minutes. He certainly didn't hurt Michigan.

Michigan managed to avoid their traditional slow start vs. OSU. There were 4 ties and 8 lead changes in the first 13 minutes, with neither team able to get more than 4 points ahead. Michigan finally grabbed the lead for good (20-18) with 7:15 to go in the 1st half, and never trailed again. The lead got as high as 8 points (33-25) with 1:09 to go in the 1st half, and UM led by 5 (33-28) at halftime. OSU got within 2 points a couple times early in the 2nd half (36-34 and 38-36), and they were only down by 3 (55-52) with 7:53 left in the game. That's when Michigan went on a brilliant 10-1 run to put the game out of reach, 65-53 with 3:15 left. UM kept the lead in double digits the rest of the way, and won convincingly.

Stats

[The stats for the Iowa game](#) are decent, but nothing special. Michigan shot pretty poorly overall (28-for-67 = 41.8%), they shot 3-pointers pretty well (12-for-33 = 36.4%), and they shot free throws poorly (6-for-12 = 50.0%). They tied in the rebounding battle (33-33), but

they won the turnover battle handily (6-16). Those 10 extra possessions really helped, but it was 3-point shooting that won the game.

[The stats for the OSU game](#) are a little better. Michigan shot pretty well overall (25-for-52 = 48.1%), they shot 3-pointers decently (7-for-20 = 35.0%), and they shot free throws well enough (17-for-24 = 70.8%). They lost the rebounding battle badly (40-30), but they won the turnover battle convincingly (7-14). After losing a couple games at the free throw line, they won this one there. They outscored OSU 17-9 in free throws. If the refs are going to call 39 fouls (22 on OSU, 17 on UM), the team that makes their free throws is going to have a distinct advantage.

Who Looked Good

The starters were [Muhammad-Ali Abdur-Rahkman](#), [Isaiah Livers](#), [Charles Matthews](#), [Zavier Simpson](#), and [Moritz Wagner](#) for both games.

MAAR is closing out his Michigan career on a high note. He was the star (and high scorer for UM) in both games, with 18 and 17 points. He was also Michigan's leader in assists in both games, with 7 and 3. He had a nice, solid game on his Senior Day.

Wagner also hit double figures in both games, with 14 and 12 points. He could have had more, but he was in foul trouble (4 fouls) in both games, only playing 24 and 23 minutes. His biggest contribution in the OSU game was when he knocked the ball away on defense, then got in the middle of a wild scrum at mid-court going for the loose ball. He didn't get it, but he did get the crowd **REALLY** fired up. It was as loud as I've heard it in Crisler in years.

Simpson had a up-and-down week. He scored 0 points vs. Iowa, then had a great game (13 points, 3 rebounds, 3 assists, 2 steals, 0 turnovers) vs. OSU.

[Duncan Robinson](#) was the other star of the Iowa game, with 18 points, all from 3-pointers. He shot 6-for-8 from 3-point range, and singlehandedly pulled Iowa out of their zone defense. Of course, since he had a great game vs. Iowa, he had to have an "off" game vs. OSU: 4 points, all on free throws, 0-for-3 from the floor. Since it was his Senior Day, everyone was just waiting for him to start raining 3's, but they wouldn't drop for him.

[Jordan Poole](#) was yet another Michigan player who had an up-and-down week. He had 2 points (on free throws) vs. Iowa, then exploded for 15 points (on 4-for-5 shooting from 3-point range) vs. OSU. He really got the crowd fired up.

[Jon Teske](#) scored 4 and 5 points, and played very good defense. He's getting more and more confident out there.

[Jaaron Simmons](#) did a nice job backing up Simpson at point guard, and scored 5 and 2 points. He was the 3rd active player honored on Senior Day.

He didn't play, and he hasn't played in 3 years, but the 4th senior honored on Senior Day was [Austin Hatch](#). He dressed for the game, warmed up with the team, and was announced as a 6th player and captain when the starting lineup was introduced. He got a very warm, emotional ovation.

Who Looked Not-So-Good

Matthews has been in a slump for several weeks, with occasional flashes of brilliance buried in long stretches of mediocrity. He manages to hit double figures every other game or so, but only on heavy shot volume. He did it again this week: 10 points (on 4-for-16 shooting) vs. Iowa, and 6 points vs. OSU. Still, he was Michigan's leading rebounder in both games (8 and 7), and he played some good defense.

Livers had a quiet week: 3 and 0 points. He played some good defense, but he sure isn't scoring.

Who Else Played

No one else played.

Who Didn't Play

[Eli Brooks](#), [Austin Davis](#), [Ibi Watson](#), and the practice squad players ([C.J. Baird](#), [Brent Hibbitts](#), [Naji Ozeir](#), [Rico Ozuna-Harrison](#), and [Luke Wilson](#)) didn't get into either game.

The Big Picture

Michigan is pretty much a lock for the NCAA Tournament at this point. Now, they get a chance to improve their seeding. With their current resume, they would probably be an 8 or 9 seed, which means a probable 2nd round game against a #1 seed. They would like to climb up to a 5 or 6 seed, which leads to a more winnable 2nd round game. They have 2 games left in the regular season to improve their seeding.

Predicted Win Total

With 2 wins last week, Michigan has caught up to my Predicted Win Total from last week (22). They have 2 games left in the regular season, both on the road, and I expect them to win at least one of them, so I'm bumping up the Expected Win Total again.

This week's Predicted Win Total is: **23**

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
11	01/08/2018	19
12	01/15/2018	20
13	01/22/2018	20
14	01/29/2018	20
15	02/05/2018	21
16	02/12/2018	22
17	02/19/2018	23

What's Next

Michigan plays 2 games this week, both on the road. These are Michigan's last 2 games of the regular season. On Wednesday (02/21/2018, 7:00 p.m., BTN), Michigan plays at [Penn State](#), then on Saturday (02/24/2018, 12:00 p.m., ESPN), Michigan plays at [Maryland](#).

Each Big Ten team plays 18 conference games. The game vs. PSU will be Game #17 for Michigan this season, and it is the first and only time they play Penn State. Weird scheduling.

Penn State is currently 19-10 (9-7 in the Big Ten), with 2 impressive wins (Ohio State, twice), and a few embarrassing home losses (Wisconsin, Rider, and Minnesota). UM can win this game, but they need to play their "A" game.

Michigan has already played Maryland once, back in mid-January, just 2 days after UM's big emotional win at Michigan State. In that game, Michigan came out flat, fell behind, clawed their way back into the game, and won it by one point in the final seconds. Since that time, Maryland has gone 4-5, with no notable wins or losses. This is another game that Michigan can win, but they'll need to play very well. Teams don't like to lose on Senior Day.

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

Go Blue!