

Nothing But 'Net – Week #04 – 11/19/2018 – The Road Warriors

The (#18) University of Michigan men's basketball team played three games on the road last week, and they won all three of them. [On Wednesday \(11/14/2018\), they beat \(#8\) Villanova 73-46](#), [on Saturday \(11/17/2018\), they beat George Washington 84-61](#), and [on Sunday \(11/18/2018\), they beat Providence 66-47](#). The Villanova game was a true "away game" (on Villanova's home court), but the other two games were in [the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall Of Fame Tip-Off Tournament](#) in Uncasville, Connecticut, which Michigan won. Michigan's record is now 5-0.

Time for more Questions & Answers:

Q: Were these more "ugly wins"?

A: Hell no! All three of these wins were solid, quality wins against good competition, although Villanova > Providence > George Washington. Michigan looked sluggish and uninterested in the two home games vs. vastly inferior competition (Norfolk State and Holy Cross) to start the season, but they were locked in this week, especially on defense.

Q: Didn't Michigan play Villanova for the National Championship back in April?

A: Yes, but it didn't go well then. It went much better this time. Both teams are very different, with lots of players graduated or off to the NBA, but it was still a good matchup that Michigan won convincingly. It was a big win. Last week, I said "This will be Michigan's first big test, and the way they've played so far, I expect Villanova to beat them to a pulp." It was just the opposite: Michigan beat Villanova to a pulp.

Q: What's this Naismith Tournament thingie?

A: Well, I had never heard of it before Michigan was scheduled to play in it, but it's been played since 2011, with some pretty impressive winners (Kentucky, North Carolina, Duke, etc.). It's certainly not one of the big tournaments, but it's still a respectable one, and it's nice to have a holiday tournament title on your resume when NCAA Tournament selection time rolls around.

Q: How did the games go?

A: Michigan led all three games wire-to-wire. They never trailed in any of them. Other than the Providence game, when Providence got within 6 points just before halftime, once Michigan got ahead by double digits, the game was over. Michigan led by as many as 32 points vs. Villanova, 37 points vs. GWU, and "only" 24 points vs. Providence.

Q: Who looked good for Michigan?

A: No one had a perfect week (double figures in all three games), but several players had a very good week, including lots of "firsts" and "career highs":

- [Charles Matthews](#) hit double figures in two of the three games (19 points vs. Villanova, 25 vs. GWU, and 5 vs. Providence). He was very good in the first two games, but had a tough time getting going vs. Providence. His only weak spot was his 3-point shooting: 0-for-4, 2-for-2, and 0-for-3, for a total of 2-for-9.
- [Ignas Brazdeikis](#) also hit double figures in two of the three games (18, 5, and 20 points). His 18 point game was a career high, broken 4 days later with his first 20-point game.
- [Zavier Simpson](#) only hit double figures in one game (9, 14, and 6 points), but he did a very good job of running the offense and finding the open man (6, 8, and 8 assists). He also had his first career double-double in the GWU game, with 11 rebounds to go with his 14 points.

- [Jon Teske](#) only scored in one of the three games (0, 0, and 17 points), but those 17 points vs. Providence were very important, and they were a career high for him. He even hit another 3-pointer.
- [Jordan Poole](#) finally woke up! He only hit double figures in one game (7, 22, and 4 points), but those 22 points vs. George Washington were very timely. They were also a career high for him. He didn't shoot 3-pointers very well in two of the games, but he did vs. GWU: 1-for-4, 5-for-8, and 0-for-3.
- [Isaiah Livers](#) only hit double figures in one game (9, 11, and 8 points), but he has been Michigan's best 3-point shooter so far this season: 2-for-2, 3-for-4, and 2-for-3. Those two 3-pointers in the Providence game were the most important baskets of the game, since they came when the teams were trading baskets/points and broke the game wide open.
- [Eli Brooks](#) continued his improved play, even though he didn't hit double figures in any of the games (5, 2, and 6 points). He's contributing quality minutes off the bench.

Q: OK, who didn't look so hot?

A: Good news: no one looked bad! A few players had "off" games (Matthews vs. Providence, Iggy vs. GWU, Teske in the first two games, etc.), but they didn't look bad, just "off". The lesser-used subs ([C.J. Baird](#), [Austin Davis](#), and [Luke Wilson](#)) and the other freshmen ([Colin Castleton](#), [David DeJulius](#), [Brandon Johns, Jr.](#), and [Adrien Nuñez](#)) all played in at least one of the three games, and they had mixed success: Castleton got 2 points vs. Villanova, DeJulius got 4 points vs. Villanova, and Johns got 5 points vs. GWU. None of them looked bad, they just need some game experience. By the way, Davis was slightly injured in the Villanova game, and didn't dress for either of the other games. He should be alright soon, possibly this week.

Q: How were the team stats?

A: Up and down. In general, Michigan shot better than their miserable performances in the first two games:

Overall shooting

28-for-55 (50.9%) vs. Villanova

31-for-62 (50.0%) vs. GWU

23-for-52 (44.2%) vs. Providence

3-point shooting

5-for-17 (29.4%) vs. Villanova

15-for-30 (50.0%) vs. GWU (This is very impressive)

6-for-18 (33.3%) vs. Providence

Free throw shooting

12-for-19 (63.2%) vs. Villanova

7-for-11 (63.6%) vs. GWU

14-for-20 (70.0%) vs. Providence

Michigan tied in the rebounding battle vs. Villanova (33-33), and won the battle vs. GWU (39-32) and Providence (39-34).

Michigan won the turnover battle in all three games: 7-21 vs. Villanova, 10-11 vs. GWU, and 11-12 vs. Providence. The turnover margin was a big part of the victory over Villanova.

Complete stats here: [Villanova](#), [GWU](#), and [Providence](#).

Q: What did we learn?

A: We learned that Michigan is a much better team than they appeared to be after the first two regular season games. We learned that they can play defense well enough to stay in

most games when the offense is having trouble getting going. And we learned that there are other scorers on the team besides Matthews and Iggy.

Q: What's next?

A: Since it's Thanksgiving Week, Michigan only has one game next week. On Friday (11/23/2018, 4:00 p.m., BTN), they play [Chattanooga](#) in Crisler Arena. Yes, that game is on Black Friday afternoon. Deal with it. Finish your shopping early and come on down to Crisler.

Chattanooga is currently 2-4, with wins over Charlotte and Cumberland, and losses to Eastern Kentucky, South Alabama, Southeast Missouri, and Jacksonville. They have some height (6'10" and 7'0"), so it could be interesting. This is a game that Michigan should win convincingly, but they'll have to play the way they did last week, not the way they did the first week.

That's it for this week.

Go Blue!