

## Nothing But 'Net – Week #06 – 12/03/2018 – Two Huge Wins

The (#7) University of Michigan men's basketball team played two games last week, and they won both of them convincingly. [On Wednesday \(11/28/2018\), they beat \(#11\) North Carolina 84-67](#), then [on Saturday \(12/01/2018\), they beat \(#19\) Purdue 76-57](#). Both games were in Crisler Arena. The UNC game was part of [the ACC/Big Ten Challenge](#), and the Purdue game was the first of two early-December Big Ten games that every Big Ten team has to play to fit in the new 20-game league schedule. Michigan's record is now 8-0 (1-0 in the Big Ten).

Time for more Questions & Answers:

Q: Huge? How big?

A: Truly huge. The win over UNC was one of the most important non-conference games in Crisler Arena in the last 10 years, and the win over Purdue was critical to Michigan's chances to compete for the Big Ten title. Both games were on national TV (ESPN), and Michigan won both games very convincingly, and looked very strong doing it. Now that Michigan has beaten three ranked teams (Villanova was the other), they're getting some serious national attention.

Q: Wasn't Michigan favored to win both of these games?

A: Yes, but they certainly weren't expected to dominate two ranked opponents like they did, winning by 17 and 19 points. Both games were tough and hard-fought, but Michigan was in control for most of both games. It was a very impressive performance, times two.

Q: Most of both games?

A: Michigan never trailed in the Purdue game, and once they got a double-digit lead, they never were threatened, but the first half of the UNC game was a little dicey. UNC came out hot, and Michigan was a little off, so UNC led 21-11 with 12:37 to go in the half. UNC came into the game with the #2 scoring offense in the country, and it looked like they were headed for their season average of 97 points a game. And then...

And then, a small miracle happened: [Zavier Simpson](#) fired up a wild shot, UNC got the rebound in a scramble and headed up court to expand their lead, but Simpson stole the ball and took it in for a layup, and that started a 17-2 Michigan run that took them from 10 down (21-11) to 5 up (28-23) in under 4 minutes. It was the turning point of the game. The teams traded the lead the rest of the half, with UNC's last lead (35-33) coming in the final minute of the half, but UM hit two 3-pointers in the last minute of the half to take a 4-point lead (39-35) into the locker room. Michigan had another good run (12-4) in the first 4 minutes of the 2<sup>nd</sup> half, and after UNC cut the lead to 9 points (51-42), Michigan pushed it back into double digits and never let it get below 10 points again. It was Simpson's steal and layup that broke UNC's momentum and swung the game in Michigan's favor.

Q: How were the crowds?

A: This is the fun part of getting to write the questions and the answers: I get to ask the right questions! The crowd for the UNC game was one of the best crowds ever in Crisler. Both games were technically "sold out", but there were a lot less "no shows" for the UNC game, and the fans that were there were really into the game. They were about as loud as I can remember for a non-MSU game, and the team gave them a lot to cheer about. The crowd for the Purdue game was a little bit smaller, and a lot less rowdy, but they still helped the team stay fired up.

Q: How was the officiating?

A: Another great question! It was fine (by Big Ten standards) for the Purdue game, but it was horrible (by any standards) for the UNC game. There were 5-6 absolutely terrible calls in a short (5 minute) period, all against Michigan. I know it seems weird to complain about bad

calls in a 17-point blow-out, but with some decent officiating, this was a 30-point win. Throw in some reasonable free-throw shooting, and Michigan wins by 40 points. Michigan played that much better than UNC.

Q: Bad free-throw shooting?

A: Terrible, just terrible. Michigan was 11-for-23 (47.8) shooting free throws vs. UNC. Many of those misses were on the front end of "one-and-one" situations. It was a good thing that UM was dominating in other areas (defense and 3-point shooting) to make up for a lousy night at the free throw line.

Oh, and just to mess with our heads, Michigan shot free throws brilliantly vs. Purdue: 11-for-13 (84.6%).

Q: How were the rest of the stats?

A: Other than free-throw shooting in the UNC game, the rest of the stats were fine:

#### Overall shooting

31-for-54 (57.4%) vs. UNC

26-for-55 (47.3%) vs. Purdue

#### 3-point shooting

11-for-22 (50.0%) vs. UNC

13-for-26 (50.0%) vs. Purdue

#### Free throw shooting

11-for-23 (47.8%) vs. UNC

11-for-13 (84.6%) vs. Purdue

Michigan got hammered on the boards vs. UNC (43-31), but out-rebounded Purdue (36-33).

Michigan won the turnover battle vs. UNC (7-10), but lost the battle to Purdue (11-9).

Complete stats here: [UNC Purdue](#)

Q: Who looked good for Michigan?

A: Several players had a good week:

- [Ignas Brazdeikis](#) hit double figures in both games (24 points vs. UNC and 12 points vs. Purdue), and shot well: 9-for-13 (2-for-4 from 3-point range) vs. UNC and 4-for-7 (2-for-3 from 3-point range) vs. Purdue. His 24 points vs. UNC were a new career high, and his 3<sup>rd</sup> game in a row scoring 20 or more points.
- [Jordan Poole](#) also hit double figures in both games (18 and 21 points), and also shot well: 6-for-13 (5-for-8 from 3-point range) vs. UNC and 8-for-9 (5-for-5 from 3-point range) vs. Purdue. Combined, that's 10-for-13 shooting 3-pointers this week!
- [Jon Teske](#) only hit double figures in one game (6 and 17 points), but he was a defensive force in the UNC game with a career-high 5 blocked shots. Those 17 points vs. Purdue tied his career high for scoring, and he even hit two more 3-pointers (on two attempts). His biggest contribution in the Purdue game was that he neutralized Purdue's 7'3" center (Matt Haarms), holding him to 5 points and 2 rebounds, while Teske had 17 points and 8 rebounds. Michigan's 7-footer is definitely better than Purdue's 7-footer!
- [Charles Matthews](#) almost hit double figures in both games (21 and 9 points), and he did much of his damage from 3-point range (2-for-4 and 3-for-6).
- [Zavier Simpson](#) hit double figures in one game this week (5 and 10 points), but he contributed even more with his assists (6 and 7). He also played great defense.

- [Eli Brooks](#) kept up his improved play, with 7 and 3 points, including a 3-pointer in each game.
- [Brandon Johns, Jr.](#) played for a couple minutes vs. Purdue, and hit two free throws.

Q: Who looked not-so-good for Michigan?

A: A couple players had disappointing weeks:

- [Isaiah Livers](#) had an "off" week for him: 3 and 2 points. His 3 points vs. UNC were from a 3-pointer, his only shot of the game. On the other hand, he missed all three 3-point attempts vs. Purdue, scoring his 2 points at the free-throw line.
- [Austin Davis](#) was held scoreless in both games, although he only played about one minute vs. Purdue, getting pulled when he committed an offensive foul right away.

Q: Who else played?

A: Even though Michigan had an insurmountable lead late in the UNC game, [Coach Beilein](#) was worried enough that he didn't put in any of the "scout team" subs, but he put four of them in for the final minute of the Purdue game: [C.J. Baird](#), [David DeJulius](#), [Adrien Nuñez](#), and [Luke Wilson](#). None of them scored.

Q: What did we learn this week?

A: We learned that Michigan is for real. While they looked great in their only previous game vs. a ranked opponent (Villanova), we had to see it again vs. a couple more ranked opponents, and we did, big time. They've still got several tough games ahead of them in the Big Ten, but they passed their first league test with flying colors.

Q: What's next for Michigan?

A: Michigan has two more games this week, one on the road and one at home. On Tuesday (12/04/2018, 9:00 p.m. EST, BTN), they play at [Northwestern](#), then on Saturday (11/08/2018, noon, FS1), they play [South Carolina](#) in Crisler Arena. The Northwestern game is the second of two early-December Big Ten games that every Big Ten team has to play to fit in the new 20-game league schedule.

Northwestern is currently 6-2 (0-1 in the Big Ten), with one decent win (Georgia Tech) and losses to Fresno State and Indiana. They have a little bit of height (three 6'10" players), a few decent players, and they're tough to beat in Evanston. In fact, Michigan's last regular season loss was at Northwestern on 02/06/2018. Michigan will have to play well to win this one.

South Carolina is currently 4-3, with no impressive wins, and losses to Stony Brook, Providence, and Wofford. They have some height (6'11" and 7'1"), but nobody noteworthy. On paper, Michigan should win this one comfortably, but they have to watch for a let-down after a tough stretch (UNC, Purdue, and Northwestern).

That's it for this week. Come on down to Crisler for the South Carolina game.

Go Blue!