

Nothing But 'Net – Week #09 – 12/24/2018 – An Uninspiring Win

The (#4) University of Michigan men's basketball team played one game last week, and they won it. [On Saturday \(12/22/2018\), they beat Air Force 71-50](#) in Crisler Arena. The win raises Michigan's record to 12-0 (2-0 in the Big Ten).

Time for more Questions & Answers:

Q: What was uninspiring about this win?

A: Air Force is another team that Michigan should beat easily, and they won comfortably, but they sure took their time doing it. They had another slow start, down 10-5 at the 13:35 mark. An 11-0 run put UM on top, 16-10, and they never trailed again, but they had a hard time putting AF away. It was a 7-point UM lead at halftime (28-21), and AF got within 6 points (34-28) with 16:42 to go. Michigan kept the lead in the 8-10 point range for the next 4-5 minutes, then they finally pulled away, although they didn't really put the game away until they hit a 3-pointer with 4:15 left, which made it a 21-point lead (66-45). Still, it was a win, even if it was an uninspiring win.

Q: Any ideas why Michigan played an uninspiring game?

A: Once again, it looked like the players were distracted by all the holiday happenings, and they were looking forward to a few days off at home. [Coach Beilein](#) mentioned in an article this week that having just one game a week doesn't keep the team very sharp, and it showed. Also, they played about as well as they needed to to beat Air Force, and they didn't waste any extra effort on beating them by a lot. I don't think there's anything to worry about.

Q: How were the team stats?

A: Uninspiring? Michigan shot decently overall (28-for-60 = 46.7%), they shot 3-pointers decently (10-for-32 = 31.3%), and they shot free throws pretty well (5-for-7 = 71.4%). They out-rebounded Air Force (32-27), and won the turnover battle handily (11-20). The 3-pointers were the difference in the game.

Complete stats [here](#).

Q: Who looked good for Michigan?

A: A few players had a good game:

- [Ignas Brazdeikis](#) bounced back from his worst game as a Wolverine (last week vs. Western Michigan) with a much better game: 19 points on 7-for-13 shooting, including 3-for-7 shooting from 3-point range.
- [Charles Matthews](#) had a nice game, with 17 points and 7 rebounds. The only downside was his 3-point shooting: 1-for-6.
- [Jordan Poole](#) also hit double figures, with 11 points. He shot pretty well (4-for-8 overall, 3-for-6 from 3-point range).
- [Isaiah Livers](#) broke out of December slump, with 11 points. He had an identical line to his roommate (Poole): 4-for-8 overall, 3-for-6 from 3-point range.
- [Eli Brooks](#) chipped in 6 points off the bench, on 3-for-6 shooting. He also handed out 4 assists, and played 25 minutes.

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

A: A couple players had an "off" game:

- [Zavier Simpson](#) only scored 2 points, on 1-for-5 shooting. He did have 7 assists.

- [Jon Teske](#) had an “off” game as well, with 2 points. With his height advantage against Air Force, he should have had 18-20 points, not 2. He even had one of his shots blocked by a 6’6” guy.

Q: Who else played?

A: Once the lead got up over 20 points with 4:15 left to go, Coach Beilein put in a few subs for some game action: [C.J. Baird](#), [Colin Castleton](#), [David DeJulius](#), [Brandon Johns, Jr.](#), and [Adrien Nuñez](#). Actually, Johns made a brief appearance in the 1st half, but fouled a 3-point shooter and was pulled after less than a minute. In any case, a couple subs took some shots (Baird, Castleton, and Nuñez), but only Castleton scored (3 points, on an offensive rebound and a nice “and one”).

Q: Who didn’t play?

A: For some reason, [Austin Davis](#) and [Luke Wilson](#) didn’t get into the game. I have no idea why.

Q: What did we learn this week?

A: We learned that Michigan can beat a decent team with an uninspiring effort. We also learned that the last game before the Christmas/holiday break is hard to get up for. Finally, we learned the difference between “full” (the North Carolina game) and “sold out” (the last couple games). This game was the 6th in a row that Michigan has technically “sold out” in Crisler, but the number of actual fans in the seats has varied wildly.

Q: What’s next for Michigan?

A: Once again, Michigan only has one game this week, at home, and on the weekend. This week, Michigan plays [Binghamton](#) on Sunday (12/30/2018, 12:00 noon, BTN) in Crisler Arena. This is Michigan’s last non-conference game before Big Ten play resumes in January.

Binghamton is currently 4-9, with no impressive wins, and losses to Cornell, New Jersey Institute of Technology (NJIT), Colgate, Army, Morgan State, and Youngstown State. They don’t have much height: three 6’9” guys, and a couple 6’8” guys. This is another game that Michigan should win easily, assuming that they can wake up and play their normal basketball. Statistically, Binghamton is the easiest game on Michigan’s schedule.

That’s it for this week. Come on down to Crisler for the Binghamton game.

Go Blue!