

## Nothing But 'Net – Week #14 – 01/28/2019 – Back In The Saddle

The (#5) University of Michigan men's basketball team played two games last week, and they won both of them. [On Tuesday \(01/22/2019\), they beat Minnesota 59-57](#) in Crisler, then [on Friday \(01/25/2019\), they beat Indiana 69-46](#) in Bloomington. The two wins raise Michigan's record to 19-1 (8-1 in the Big Ten).

Time for more Questions & Answers:

Q: Wait, #5? What happened to #2?

A: [The loss to Wisconsin on 01/19/2019](#) moved Michigan down three spots in the AP Poll, which is reasonable.

Q: Back in the saddle?

A: After the demoralizing loss to Wisconsin, Michigan had to get their swagger back. They had to get back on that horse and keep moving forward. They still looked stunned and scared for much of the Minnesota game, but they appeared to have shaken it off vs. IU. They really need to put that one loss behind them, and not let it turn into multiple losses.

Q: So, what happened?

A: Michigan had a horrible start in the Minnesota game. They were cold, Minnesota was hot, and the game started slipping away almost immediately. Minnesota jumped out to a quick 6-0 lead, and pushed it up to 16-8, then 19-10. Michigan finally woke up, and clawed their way to a 23-23 tie. Minnesota pulled back ahead, and led 31-28 at halftime. They continued to lead for the first four minutes of the 2<sup>nd</sup> half, before Michigan tied it up again, 37-37, and finally got the lead, 39-37 with 15:23 to go. Michigan never trailed again, and built the lead up to 13 points (52-39) with 9:10 left in the game. It looked like Michigan had the game firmly in hand, then they went cold. Still, with good defense they still led by 10 points (57-47) with 4:51 to go. Those were the last points Michigan would score until the final second of the game. Minnesota slowly crawled back into the game, and tied it up 57-57 with 30.7 seconds left. Michigan held the ball for the last shot, and [Charles Matthews](#) was the hero with a buzzer-beater that just left his hand before the shot clock went off, and swished through as time expired. It was thrilling, but scary. Michigan is much better than Minnesota, and they should have won this game convincingly, especially at home. The hangover from the Wisconsin loss almost cost them this game.

After a terrible start vs. Minnesota, Michigan needed a good start against a desperate IU team in a loud, hostile arena, and they got it. They shot well, played good defense, and watched IU miss every shot in the first five minutes, which resulted in a gorgeous 17-0 lead. They kept the lead in the 14-16 point range for the rest of the half, and led by 15 (33-18) at halftime. That was the worst scoring half for IU this season. IU started the 2<sup>nd</sup> half hot, and cut the lead down to 9 points (38-29) with 16:47 to go. That was as close as they got. Michigan pushed the lead back up to the 16-18 point range, then extended it to the 20-22 point range down the stretch, winning by 23 points. That is Michigan's largest margin of victory ever in Bloomington.

Q: Any problems with the officiating?

A: Nope. They were fine, in their "equally incompetent against both teams" way.

Q: How were the game stats?

A: About what you would expect: lousy for the close game, and good for the blow-out:

[In the Minnesota game](#), Michigan shot terribly overall (21-for-62 = 33.9%), they shot 3-pointers horribly (3-for-22 = 13.6%), and they shot free throws poorly (14-for-22 = 63.6%).

They lost the rebounding battle badly (43-33), but they won the turnover battle (6-16). Frankly, looking at these stats, I don't know how Michigan managed to win.

[The stats for the Indiana game](#) are better. Michigan shot fairly well overall (25-for-58 = 43.1%), they shot 3-pointers reasonably well (10-for-29 = 34.5%), and they shot free throws well enough (9-for-12 = 75.0%). They won the rebounding battle (44-39), and tied in the turnover battle (9-9). The 3-point shooting won the game.

Q: Who looked good for Michigan?

A: A few players had a good week:

- [Ignas Brazdeikis](#) bounced back from the worst game of his (short) career with two solid games. He was the high scorer in both games, with 18 points vs. Minnesota and 20 points vs. IU. He was very inefficient in the Minnesota game (4-for-18, 1-for-7 from 3-point range), but he cleaned that up in the IU game (8-for-12, 3-for-5 from deep). He had 11 rebounds vs. Minnesota, for a double-double.
- [Jon Teske](#) was the only other player to hit double figures in both games (15 and 11). He was the only player who shot well against Minnesota (7-for-8, 1-for-1 from 3-point range).
- [Charles Matthews](#): Even though he only hit double figures in one game (10 points vs. IU), he was the hero of the Minnesota game with his buzzer-beater. He only had 7 points in that game, but two of them were very important. He also had 11 rebounds in the IU game, for a double-double. He also played great lock-down defense on IU's leading scorer, Romeo Langford.
- [Zavier Simpson](#) also only hit double figures in one game (12 points vs. IU, 6 points vs. Minnesota), but he did a great job running the offense in both games, and played great defense as well.

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

A: A few players had an "off" week:

- [Jordan Poole](#) kind of disappeared last week, with 3 and 6 points, on terrible shooting: 1-for-5 (0-for-3 from deep) vs. Minnesota, and 2-for-7 (2-for-5 from deep) vs. IU.
- [Isaiah Livers](#) also had a bad week scoring, with 7 and 5 points, on terrible shooting: 2-for-8 (1-for-5 from deep) vs. Minnesota, and 1-for-7 (1-for-4 from deep) vs. IU.
- [Eli Brooks](#) had 2 points in each game, on terrible shooting: 1-for-4 (0-for-1 from deep) vs. Minnesota, and 1-for-3 (0-for-1 from deep) vs. IU.

Q: Who else played this week?

A: [Coach Beilein](#) used his very short bench (8 players) in the close game vs. Minnesota, but put in lots of subs and scrubs in the last minute of the IU game:

- [Brandon Johns, Jr.](#) played in both games, but didn't score.
- [Adrien Nuñez](#) scored his first career points vs. IU, with a beautiful (long) 3-pointer that he swished.
- [C.J. Baird](#), [Austin Davis](#), [David DeJulius](#), and [Luke Wilson](#) all played in the IU game, but didn't score.

Q: What did we learn this week?

A: We learned that Michigan can (barely) bounce back from a devastating loss, and that they can win big on the road in the Big Ten. We also learned that they can (barely) survive a bad shooting night against a good Big Ten team, but that it's not a good idea.

Q: What's up with the Big Ten standings?

A: Oh yeah, I haven't talked about the race for the Big Ten title yet. Let's have a look:

Team (AP Rank)	Big Ten Record	Overall Record
Michigan State (#6)	9-1 (0.900)	18-3 (0.857)
Michigan (#5)	8-1 (0.889)	19-1 (0.950)
Purdue	7-2 (0.778)	14-6 (0.700)
Maryland (#13)	7-3 (0.700)	16-5 (0.762)
Wisconsin	6-3 (0.667)	14-6 (0.700)
Minnesota	5-4 (0.556)	15-5 (0.750)
Iowa (#19)	5-5 (0.500)	16-5 (0.762)
Ohio State	3-5 (0.375)	13-6 (0.684)
Nebraska	3-6 (0.333)	13-7 (0.650)
Indiana	3-6 (0.333)	12-8 (0.600)
Northwestern	3-6 (0.333)	12-8 (0.600)
Rutgers	3-6 (0.333)	10-9 (0.526)
Illinois	2-7 (0.222)	6-14 (0.300)
Penn State	0-9 (0.000)	7-13 (0.350)

There are a few surprises here:

- Indiana was predicted to have an outside chance at the Big Ten title; instead, they are 3-6, with a 6-game losing streak.
- Nebraska was predicted to be one of the top 2-3 teams in the Big Ten; instead, they are 3-6, tied for 9<sup>th</sup> place.
- Iowa was predicted to finish in the bottom half of the Big Ten; instead, they have been ranked for most of the season, although they have stumbled lately.
- Penn State was predicted to be a middle-of-the-pack team; instead, they are winless and in the basement, 2 games behind lowly Illinois.

Q: What's next for Michigan?

A: Michigan plays two games again this week, again on Tuesday and Friday, and again home then away. On Tuesday (01/29/2019, 9:00 p.m., ESPN2), they play [Ohio State](#) in Crisler, then on Friday (02/01/2019, 7:00 p.m. EST, FS1), they play at (#19) [Iowa](#).

Ohio State is currently 13-6 (3-5 in Big Ten), with wins over Cincinnati, Creighton, Minnesota, and UCLA, and losses to Syracuse, Rutgers (!), and Purdue. They don't have much height (a couple 6'9" guys), and no real superstars. They were ranked for part of the season, but their 5-game losing streak in the Big Ten took care of that. Michigan is certainly better than OSU, but they will need to play well to beat them.

Iowa is currently 16-5 (5-5 in Big Ten), with wins over Oregon, UConn, Pitt, Iowa State, Nebraska, and Ohio State, and losses to Wisconsin, Michigan State (twice), Purdue, and Illinois (!). They have a couple 6'11" guys, and a couple 6'9" guys. They have been ranked since week #3, and they will be a very challenging opponent, especially on their home court. This game will tell us whether Michigan can beat a good Big Ten team on the road.

That's it for this week. Check back next week to see how Michigan did.

Go Blue!