

Nothing But 'Net – Week #15 – 02/04/2019 – Roadkill

The (#5) University of Michigan men's basketball team played two games last week, and they won one and lost the other. [On Tuesday \(01/29/2019\), they beat Ohio State 65-49](#) in Crisler, then [on Friday \(02/01/2019\), they lost at Iowa 74-59](#). The win and the loss leave Michigan with a record of 20-2 (9-2 in the Big Ten), tied for 1st place with Michigan State and Purdue.

Time for more Questions & Answers:

Q: Roadkill?

A: Yeah, the home team won both games this week. Unfortunately, Michigan was the visiting team at Iowa. The opposite of "road warriors" is "roadkill". Michigan is now 3-2 in Big Ten road games, with wins at Northwestern, Illinois, and Indiana, and losses at Wisconsin and Iowa.

Q: So, what happened?

A: As good as Michigan looked against OSU, that's how bad they looked vs. Iowa. The OSU game didn't start out very well, with OSU leading for the first 12 minutes, before UM tied it (19-19) with 8:10 to go in the 1st half. The teams traded the lead until the 2:10 mark, when Michigan went ahead for good, 27-26. They led by 6 points (32-26) at halftime, and 11 points (44-33) with 12:35 to go. OSU got as close as 8 points (44-36), before UM pushed the lead up to the 14-16 point range and kept it there.

The Iowa game started out close, with several ties and lead changes in the first 9 minutes. It was tied up 12-12 with 11:21 to go in the 1st half, when Michigan went on a quick 5-0 run to take their only significant lead (17-12), with 10:48 left. That's when the roof fell in. Iowa went on a long, painful 21-2 run over the next 5 minutes that crushed the life out of Michigan. That made it 33-19, and that was the game. Michigan made a few feeble attempts at a comeback, and got within 9 points (50-41) with 12:28 left in the game, but Iowa was hot, and Michigan was not. It was a very discouraging performance.

Q: Any problems with the officiating?

A: Well...

Let's just say that they called the Iowa game a little more closely than any game I've seen in the last 10 years. Maybe they called it evenly for both teams, but they certainly were REALLY picky about what they called a foul. It made the game unwatchable.

Q: How were the game stats?

A: About what you would expect: good for the win, and lousy for the loss:

[In the OSU game](#), Michigan shot pretty well overall (22-for-54 = 40.7%), they shot 3-pointers well (10-for-27 = 37.0%), and they shot free throws very well (11-for-12 = 91.7%). They lost the rebounding battle (35-29), but they dominated in the turnover battle (9-19). Those 10 extra possessions really helped.

[In the Iowa game](#), Michigan shot poorly overall (21-for-65 = 32.3%), they shot 3-pointers terribly (8-for-33 = 24.2%), but they did shoot free throws well (9-for-12 = 75.0%). They got clobbered on the boards (48-36), but they did win the turnover battle (8-10). The combination of poor shooting and terrible rebounding cost Michigan this game.

Q: Who looked good for Michigan?

A: A few players had a good week:

- [Jordan Poole](#) bounced back from a quiet week last week with a solid week this week. He was the high scorer for Michigan in both games, with 15 points vs. OSU and 16 points vs. Iowa. Unfortunately, he was inefficient in both games: 5-for-14 overall (3-for-10 from deep) vs. OSU, and 5-for-12 overall (3-for-9 from deep) vs. Iowa.
- [Ignas Brazdeikis](#) also had a solid week. He was the co-high scorer in the Iowa game (16 points), and just one point behind Poole in the OSU game (14 points). He was much more efficient than Poole: 4-for-7 (2-for-3 from deep) vs. OSU, and 6-for-15 (2-for-4 from deep) vs. Iowa.
- [Zavier Simpson](#) was the real star of the OSU game, even though he wasn't the high scorer. He scored 11 points, which is fine, but he also had 10 rebounds and 12 assists (a new career high), for a rare "triple-double". It was only the 6th triple-double in UM history. He flirted with a second straight triple-double in the Iowa game, with 10 points, 8 rebounds, and 7 assists.
- [Isaiah Livers](#) hit double figures in one game (12 points vs. OSU), but only 3 points vs. Iowa. He was limited by foul trouble for most of the Iowa game (see above about officiating), picking up 4 fouls in 14 minutes.

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

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

- [Jon Teske](#) didn't hit double figures in either game (4 and 8 points). He was severely limited by foul trouble in the Iowa game (see above about officiating), and fouled out in only 13 minutes.
- [Charles Matthews](#) had a really inefficient week. He had 9 and 6 points, but he shot terribly, especially in the Iowa game: 3-for-8 overall (1-for-3 from deep) vs. OSU, and 2-for-12 overall (2-for-7 from deep) vs. Iowa.
- [Eli Brooks](#) played in both games, but didn't score a point in either. He didn't attempt a shot vs. OSU, and was 0-for-3 vs. Iowa. Michigan needs some bench points from him.

Q: Who else played this week?

A: [Coach Beilein](#) played the subs and scrubs in the last minute of the OSU blow-out, and he was forced to play several not-ready-for-primetime players in the Iowa game, due to foul trouble. [Colin Castleton](#), [Austin Davis](#), [David DeJulius](#), [Brandon Johns, Jr.](#), and [Adrien Nuñez](#) all played in both games, but didn't score. The "big men" (Castleton, Davis, and Johns) played more minutes than usual when both Teske and Livers got in foul trouble in the Iowa game. They were not effective.

Q: What did we learn this week?

A: We learned that Michigan has a tough time playing against a good Big Ten team on the road in a loud and hostile environment. We could explain away the loss at Wisconsin a couple weeks ago as a result of the stress of the long winning streak to start the season, but the debacle in Iowa was purely a matter of crumbling under adversity. When Iowa started their run, and the crowd got going, you could see the fear and uncertainty on the faces of the Michigan players. Now, all the remaining Big Ten games on the road are in question.

Q: What's next for Michigan?

A: Michigan plays two games again this week, one away and one at home. On Tuesday (02/05/2019, 8:00 p.m., BTN), they play at [Rutgers](#), then on Saturday (02/09/2019, 12:00 p.m., FOX), they play (#24) [Wisconsin](#) in Crisler.

Rutgers is currently 11-10 (4-7 in Big Ten), with wins over Miami (FL), Ohio State, Nebraska, and Indiana, and losses to Fordham, Seton Hall, Northwestern, and Ohio State. They have some height (a 7'0" guy and three 6'10" guys), but no real superstars. They are currently tied for 9th place in the Big Ten (with Indiana), which is a big improvement on 13th or 14th place,

where they usually finish. Michigan is certainly better than Rutgers, but they will need to play well to beat them, especially on the road. There are no easy wins on the road in the Big Ten.

Wisconsin is currently 16-6 (8-3 in Big Ten), just one game behind the three teams tied for 1st place (Michigan, Michigan State, and Purdue). They beat Michigan handily in Madison 2 weeks ago (01/19/2019), and that was the start of a 5-game winning streak for them, beating Illinois (away), Northwestern, Nebraska (away), and (#21) Maryland since then. This is a crucial game for Michigan. They can beat Wisconsin, but they need to get their swagger back to do it.

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

Go Blue!