Nothing But 'Net – Week #16 – 02/11/2019 – A Road Win, And Revenge

The (#7) University of Michigan men's basketball team played two games last week, and they won them both. On Tuesday (02/05/2019), they won at Rutgers 77-65, then on Saturday (02/09/2019), they beat (#19) Wisconsin 61-52 in Crisler. The wins raise Michigan's record to 22-2 (11-2 in the Big Ten). Michigan is now all alone in 1st place, although Purdue also has just 2 losses in Big Ten play, they just haven't played as many games as Michigan.

Time for more Questions & Answers:

Q: Revenge?

A: It was sweet revenge, after Wisconsin beat Michigan in Madison back on 01/19/2019, handing Michigan their first loss after a 17-game winning streak to start the season. Michigan played pretty poorly in that game, and they wanted a chance to show Wisconsin how the game could have gone if they had played closer to their potential. Michigan played much better against UW the second time around, especially down the stretch.

Q: So, what happened?

A: Rutgers is much better this season than they've been since they joined the Big Ten. In years past, a road trip to Piscataway wouldn't be very scary; you just play a decent game, and Rutgers will obligingly fold up and hand you the game. Not this season: Michigan had to play a good, solid game to beat Rutgers, and they earned the win. Michigan pulled out to a nice 12 point lead (18-6) with 14:18 to go in the 1st half, then stretched it to 17 points (27-10) with 10:56 to go. UM kept the lead in the 15-17 point range for the next few minutes, until Rutgers went on a quick 8-0 run to cut the lead down to 9 points (38-29) with 3:06 left in the half. Michigan got the lead back up to 12 points (43-31) at halftime. Rutgers opened the 2nd half with another run, and cut the lead down to 7 points (48-41) with 15:01 left in the game. That was as close as they got. Michigan pushed the lead up into the 12-14 point range and kept it there for most of the rest of the game. Rutgers got within 8-9 points a couple times, but Michigan always had an answer, winning by 12 points.

The Wisconsin game was tight, close, and low scoring. Wisconsin started strong, and led by 8 points (13-5) with 14:36 to go in the 1st half. Michigan finally got going, and took the lead (18-17) with 9:06 left in the half. The lead went back and forth, but never more than 2-3 points, and the game was tied (27-27) at halftime. Michigan took the lead for good at the 17:33 mark, but never got more than 3-5 points ahead until the last 4:16. UM outscored Wisconsin 10-2 down the stretch, to win by 9. It was a great finish.

Q: How were the game stats?

A: Not bad. Michigan played pretty well in both games, and the stats show it.

In the Rutgers game, Michigan shot well overall (26-for-58 = 44.8%), they shot 3-pointers very well (11-for-23 = 47.8%), and they shot free throws very well (14-for-17 = 82.4%). They lost the rebounding battle (36-34), but they won the turnover battle (7-9). When Michigan shoots their 3-pointers well, they usually win.

In the Wisconsin game, Michigan shot well overall (25-for-56 = 44.6%), they shot 3-pointers pretty poorly (4-for-17 = 23.5%), and they shot free throws very well (7-for-9 = 77.8%). Miraculously, they won the rebounding battle (36-33), and they won the turnover battle (5-7). Michigan won this game with overall shooting and defense. They also outscored Wisconsin 7-0 on the free-throw line. That's right: Wisconsin made zero (0) free throws, on only 2 attempts. One other interesting stat: Michigan shot 4-for-7 from 3-point range in the 1st half, then went 0-for-10 in the 2nd half. If any one of those 10 attempts had gone in, the end of the game would have been a lot less tense.

Q: Who looked good for Michigan?

A: A few players had a good week:

- [Jordan Poole](#) hit double figures in both games, with 15 vs. Rutgers and 10 vs. Wisconsin. Once again, he wasn't very efficient (5-for-13 overall, 3-for-6 from deep, vs. Rutgers, and 4-for-11 overall, 2-for-6 from deep, vs. Wisconsin). He almost had a double-double vs. Wisconsin with a career-high 9 rebounds.
- [Charles Matthews](#) also hit double figures in both games, with 11 vs. Rutgers and 18 vs. Wisconsin. He was the hero of the Wisconsin game, with 16 of his 18 points in the 2nd half, including several clutch shots in the last few minutes.
- [Zavier Simpson](#) hit double figures in one game this week (14 and 5 points), and he flirted with another triple-double in the Rutgers game, with 14 points, 7 rebounds, and 7 assists. As usual, he ran the offense very well, and played great defense.
- [Ignas Brazdeikis](#) also only hit double figures in one game this week, but he did it in extreme fashion: he was the high scorer and hero of the Rutgers game, with 23 points, but he had a terrible game vs. Wisconsin, with 2 points on 1-for-9 (0-for-4 from deep) shooting. Combined with his 0 points in the first Wisconsin game, he has 2 points for 80 minutes of game action. Ugh. I don't know what it is about Wisconsin, since he's hit double figures in all but 2 of his other games this season.
- [Jon Teske](#) only hit double figures in one game this week (7 and 17 points), but he was a big factor in the win over Wisconsin. Besides his 17 points, he also had 12 rebounds, for a nice double-double, but he also played very hard on defense, trying to contain Ethan Happ. No one can stop Happ, you can only hope to slow him down. He started the Michigan game with 8 of Wisconsin's first 10 points, and he had 14 points with 2:46 left in the half. Teske finally figured out how to neutralize him, and held him to only 4 points for the rest of the game.
- [Isaiah Livers](#) didn't score a lot this week (5 and 9 points), but he played some crucial defense on Ethan Happ, when Jon Teske was on the bench.

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

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

- [Eli Brooks](#) played in both games, but didn't score a point in either. He was 0-for-2 vs. Rutgers, and didn't attempt a shot vs. Wisconsin. Michigan needs some bench points from him.
- [Brandon Johns, Jr.](#) played in both games, and scored 2 points vs. Rutgers, but didn't attempt a shot vs. Wisconsin.

Q: Who else played this week?

A: Both games were tight, so [Coach Beilein](#) didn't play anyone else.

Q: What did we learn this week?

A: We learned that Michigan still has a little swagger left. They played well on the road vs. Rutgers, and they played tough down the stretch against a good (ranked) opponent, Wisconsin. Now, they need to show that they can beat a good opponent on the road.

Q: What's next for Michigan?

A: Michigan plays two games again this week, one away and one at home. On Tuesday (02/12/2019, 8:30 p.m., BTN), they play at [Penn State](#), then on Saturday (02/16/2019, 12:00 p.m., FOX), they play (#24) [Maryland](#) in Crisler.

Penn State is currently 8-15 (1-11 in Big Ten), with wins over Virginia Tech and Northwestern, and lots of losses. Michigan already played and beaten them (68-55) back on 01/03/2019. That started a 10-game losing streak for PSU, all in the Big Ten. They finally beat Northwestern, then lost to Ohio State. They are in last place in the Big Ten. Michigan can

beat them again, even on the road, but they need to play well, and not let the (meager) Penn State crowd get into the game.

Maryland is currently 18-6 (9-4 in Big Ten), with wins over Loyola (Chicago), Indiana, and Wisconsin, and losses to Seton Hall, Illinois, and Wisconsin. They have some height (two 6'10" guys and two 6'9" guys), including another beast in the middle, [Bruno Fernando](#). This will be a tough game, but Michigan can beat them with the kind of effort and focus they showed in the Purdue, Ohio State, and Wisconsin games in Crisler.

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

Go Blue!