

Nothing But 'Net – Week #19 – 03/04/2019 – The Race For Second Place

The (#9) University of Michigan men's basketball team played two games last week, and they won them both. [On Thursday \(02/28/2019\), they beat Nebraska 82-53](#) in Crisler, then [on Sunday \(03/03/2019\), they won at \(#17\) Maryland 69-62](#). The two wins raise Michigan's record to 26-4 (15-4 in the Big Ten).

Time for more Questions & Answers:

Q: The race for second place?

A: Yeah, unfortunately, Purdue is probably going to win the Big Ten regular season championship outright, but Michigan and Michigan State are now tied for 2nd place in the loss column, and the last game of the season should decide that. Purdue is currently 15-3 in the Big Ten, with two games left: at Minnesota on Tuesday (03/05), and at Northwestern on Saturday (03/09). They will be heavily favored in both games, and if they win them both, they'll win the league outright. Michigan is currently 15-4 and MSU is 14-4. MSU has two games left: home vs. Nebraska on Tuesday, and home vs. Michigan on Saturday. MSU should handle Nebraska, setting up the big game for 2nd place on Saturday.

Q: So, what happened?

A: The Nebraska game was a nice, solid, encouraging win. Michigan opened up a quick early lead (5-0), built on it (10-2), and never let Nebraska get close. It was a 22-point lead (43-21) at halftime, and Nebraska never got closer than 17 points the rest of the way. It was a great game to have as the last home game of the season. Everyone got to play (with one exception), and it was a fun, stress-free game. The one exception: [Charles Matthews](#) who missed the game (and the Maryland game) due to an ankle injury he suffered in the MSU game. It was a shame, because Charles is the only senior on the team, and it was Senior Night. Charles has one more year of eligibility left, but Michigan is short one scholarship next season, so he will probably either try his luck with the NBA draft or go elsewhere for his "grad year" transfer.

The Maryland game was much more exciting. Maryland led early, but Michigan never let them get very far ahead, typically 3-5 points. Michigan tied the game repeatedly, but couldn't "get over the hump" and get ahead until there was 2:16 left in the 1st half, when they finally pulled ahead 24-22. Michigan finished the half on a 4-0 run to lead by 4 at halftime, 28-24. Maryland had a 9-2 run early in the 2nd half to reclaim the lead, 36-35 with 15:50 to go. They still led, 43-41, with 11:23 left, when Michigan went on a 12-2 run of their own, and led 53-45, with 4:38 to go. Maryland never got closer than 5 points the rest of the way. It was a great win, especially since road wins are so hard to get in the Big Ten.

Q: Any problems with the officiating?

A: Nah, they were reasonable, for Big Ten refs.

Q: How were the game stats?

A: About what you would expect: great for the blow-out win over Nebraska, and barely acceptable for the close win over Maryland.

[In the Nebraska game](#), Michigan shot very well overall (30-for-54 = 55.6%), they shot 3-pointers very well (12-for-22 = 54.5%), but they didn't shoot free throws very well (10-for-19 = 52.6%). They crushed Nebraska on the boards (43-31), but they lost the turnover battle badly (13-7). The 3-point shooting was the reason Michigan won.

[In the Maryland game](#), Michigan shot decently overall (25-for-57 = 43.9%), they shot 3-pointers pretty poorly (6-for-20 = 30.0%), and they shot free throws very well (13-for-15 = 86.7%). They lost the rebounding battle (35-31), but they won the turnover battle (4-9).

Since Maryland had almost identical overall (25-for-58) and 3-point (6-for-20) shooting stats, the difference was at the free throw line, where Maryland only shot 6-for-10. Those extra 7 points were the exact margin of victory.

Here's an amazing bit of trivia: all five starters for each team hit double figures in the Maryland game. I can't remember when that has happened before.

Q: Who looked good for Michigan?

A: A few players had a good week:

- [Ignas Brazdeikis](#) had a great week, with 20 points vs. Nebraska and 21 points vs. Maryland. He was the spark that pushed Michigan into the lead in the last 10 minutes of the Maryland game.
- [Jon Teske](#) also had a very good week, with 22 and 11 points. Those 22 points are a new career high for Jon. He also had 10 rebounds in each game, for two double-doubles. Jon shot 3-pointers great in the Nebraska game (3-for-3) and terribly in the Maryland game (1-for-6). However, the one 3-pointer that he hit vs. Maryland was very timely (a dagger).
- [Isaiah Livers](#) hit double figures in both games, with 12 and 11 points. He started both games in place of Charles Matthews. Isaiah also had 10 rebounds in the Nebraska game, for a double-double.
- [Zavier Simpson](#) only hit double figures in one game this week, with 4 and 12 points, but he had 10 assists in each game, giving him a rare "points and assists" double-double in the Maryland game. He hit four or five of his amazing running hook shots in the Maryland game.
- [Jordan Poole](#) also only hit double figures in one game this week, with 6 and 12 points.
- [Colin Castleton](#) had a great game against Nebraska (11 points and 3 rebounds) and a quiet game against Maryland (2 points). Up until the Nebraska game, Colin had only scored 6 points all season, and hadn't scored in 2019. He was great vs. Nebraska.

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

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

- [Eli Brooks](#) played in both games, and failed to score. After playing pretty well in the early games, Eli hasn't done much in months, with a total of 10 points in 2019.
- [David DeJulius](#) played in both games, and scored 2 points vs. Nebraska.
- [Brandon Johns, Jr.](#) played in the Nebraska game, and scored 2 points. He didn't play in the Maryland game.

Q: Who else played this week?

A: [Coach Beilein](#) played everyone in the last minute of the Nebraska blow-out:

- [C.J. Baird](#) took one shot, a 3-pointer, and splashed it!
- [Austin Davis](#) didn't attempt a shot.
- [Adrien Nuñez](#) attempted three 3-pointers, and missed them all.
- [Rico Ozuna-Harrison](#) didn't attempt a shot.
- [Luke Wilson](#) didn't attempt a shot.

Q: What did we learn this week?

A: We learned that Michigan can beat a good Big Ten team on the road. Michigan hasn't done very well recently against ranked opponents on the road, so the Maryland win was huge.

Q: What's next for Michigan?

A: Michigan only plays one game this week, and it's HUGE. On Saturday (03/09/2019, 8:00 p.m., ESPN), they play at (#6) [Michigan State](#). This is the last game of the regular season.

Yes, Michigan just played MSU last week (02/24/2019) in Crisler, and MSU won. Yes, it's going to be a lot tougher to beat them in Breslin. It looks like Purdue is going to win the Big Ten title, so this game will be for 2nd place. Michigan has the talent to beat MSU, they just need to play their "A" game. It helps that Michigan has almost a week between games to prepare for this one.

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

Go Blue!