Nothing But 'Net – Week #08 – 12/16/2019 – A Lost Week

The (#5) University of Michigan men's basketball team played two games this week, and they lost both of them. On Wednesday (12/11/2019), they lost at Illinois 71-62, then on Saturday (12/14/2019), they lost to (#10) Oregon 71-70 in overtime in Crisler Arena. The two losses leave Michigan with a record of 8-3 (1-1 in the Big Ten). Michigan has now lost two games in a row, and three out of the last four. They will probably drop out of the Top 25, after two weeks at #4 and #5.

What Happened?

I don't know why, but Michigan lost all the "mojo" they had in the Bahamas. As good as they looked against top competition two weeks ago, they looked that bad this week. They could have won both games, but they made way too many dumb mistakes at crucial times.

In the Illinois game, Michigan kept the game close early, and even led by 2 points (26-24) with 4:31 left in the 1st half. Illinois led by 2 at halftime (30-28), but Michigan tied it (32-32) with 18:54 left in the game. That was the last time it was tied. Illinois went ahead, and never trailed again. The lead was in the 8-10 point range for most of the half, although Michigan did get it down to 4 points (66-62) with 2:06 remaining. Illinois scored the last 5 points, and that was the game.

Michigan fell way behind Oregon in the 1st half, down 15 points (22-7) with 9:49 to go. Just like the Louisville game, they couldn't buy a basket. 7 points in 10 minutes is embarrassing. Oregon kept the lead in the 10-12 point range for most of the 1st half, although Michigan did get within 6 points (29-23) with 1:52 left. Oregon led by 8 points (31-23) at halftime. Michigan kept within 4-6 points for the first 10 minutes of the 2nd half, then started slowly creeping up on Oregon. They finally tied the game up (48-48) with 8:49 left, and it was close the rest of the way. The lead seesawed back and forth, with neither team pulling more than 3 points ahead. Michigan tied it up (63-63) with 25 seconds left in regulation, and held on to get to overtime. Overtime started out well, with a quick 3 point lead (66-63), but Oregon fought back, took the lead 71-68 with 1:14 to go, and Michigan could only score 2 points the rest of the way, despite taking 6 shots.

Stats

The stats for the Illinois game are terrible. Michigan shot poorly overall (27-for-62 = 43.5%), they shot 3-pointers terribly (3-for-18 = 16.7%), and they barely shot free throws (5-for-6 = 83.3%). They were destroyed in the rebounding battle (44-28), but they did win the turnover battle (8-13). As a general rule, when Michigan shoots 3-pointers poorly, they lose.

The stats for the Oregon game are a little better. Michigan shot poorly overall (25-for-61 = 41.0%), but they shot 3-pointers pretty well (9-for-21 = 42.9%), and they shot free throws pretty well (11-for-14 = 78.6%).   They tied in the rebounding battle (32-32), and they won the turnover battle (11-16). This game goes to show that when Michigan shoots 3-pointers well, they still can lose.

Who Started?

The starters were Eli Brooks, Isaiah Livers, Zavier Simpson, Jon Teske, and Franz Wagner.

Who Looked Good?

Livers was the only Michigan player to hit double figures in both games this week (12 and 13 points). He shot 3-pointers well: 2-for-3 vs. Illinois and 3-for-6 vs. Oregon.

Simpson didn't hit double figures in either game (9 and 8 points), but he did have a bunch of assists (8 and 11). Unfortunately, he had 4 turnovers in the Oregon game, and they all seemed to come at exactly the worst possible time.

David DeJulius had a pretty good game vs. Illinois (7 points) and a very good game against Oregon (14 points).

Brandon Johns, Jr. had a mediocre game vs. Illinois (2 points) and a good game against Oregon (8 points and 9 rebounds).

Who Looked Not-So-Good?

Teske had one good game (16 points vs. Illinois) and one awful game (4 points vs. Oregon).

Brooks also had a good game vs. Illinois (12 points) and a bad game vs. Oregon (2 points).

Wagner had one bad game (4 points vs. Illinois) and one very good game (21 points vs. Oregon).

Who Else Played?

Colin Castleton played in both games (9 and 3 minutes), and didn't even attempt a shot.

Adrien Nuñez played in both games (6 and 3 minutes), and tried and missed a 3-pointer in each game.

Who Didn't Play?

C.J. Baird, Cole Bajema, Austin Davis, Jaron Faulds, Rico Ozuna-Harrison, and Luke Wilson didn't get in either game.

What Does It Mean?

It's hard to be optimistic after three losses in the last four games. On the one hand, Michigan played hard in all three games, but on the other hand, they didn't play very smart. Many of the mistakes they made were mental, and too many of them were unforced. They appear to have lost the confidence they built up in the Bahamas. They play well for stretches, then they just fall apart at key moments. We know they have the talent to beat any team in the country, but they have the inconsistency to lose to anyone as well.

What's Next?

This week, Michigan only plays one game, in Crisler Arena. On Saturday (12/21/2019, 12:00 p.m., BTN), they play Presbyterian.

Presbyterian is a classic "cupcake", just like Houston Baptist, and Michigan will roll over them, probably hitting 100+ points again. This will tell us nothing.

Check back next week to see how Michigan did.

Go Blue!