

Nothing But 'Net – Week #10 – 12/30/2019 – The Last Cupcake & Mid-Term Grades

The (#11) University of Michigan men's basketball team played one game this week, and they won it. [On Sunday \(12/29/2019\), they beat UMass-Lowell 86-60](#) in Crisler Arena. The win raises Michigan's record to 10-3 (1-1 in the Big Ten).

What Happened?

This was Michigan's last "cupcake" game of the season. Starting next week, Michigan plays 18 Big Ten games in a row. There are no cupcakes in the Big Ten this season.

UML was overmatched, and they never really stood a chance. Michigan had a huge height advantage, and they took full advantage of it. UM led the whole way, by 17 at halftime (42-25), and as many as 32 points in the 2nd half. [Coach Howard](#) emptied the bench, and the game was never in doubt.

Stats

The stats for the game are pretty good. Michigan shot pretty well overall (36-for-67 = 53.7%), they shot 3-pointers fairly well (8-for-21 = 38.1%), and they shot free throws very well (6-for-7 = 85.7%). They won the rebounding battle handily (41-25), but they lost the turnover battle (14-13).

Who Started?

The starters were [Eli Brooks](#), [Brandon Johns, Jr.](#), [Zavier Simpson](#), [Jon Teske](#), and [Franz Wagner](#). Johns started in place of [Isaiah Livers](#), who is out indefinitely with a groin injury he suffered in the opening minutes of the win over Presbyterian.

Who Looked Good?

Teske was the leading scorer, with a career-high 25 points. He also had 8 rebounds. He had 6 inches on the tallest UML player, so he was able to score at will. He shot 11-for-14 overall.

Brooks was the only other Michigan player in double figures, with 15 points. He shot 3-for-7 from 3-point range.

Simpson almost hit double figures, with 9 points. He also had 10 assists.

Johns had a solid game, with 6 points on 3-for-4 shooting.

[Austin Davis](#) played 13 minutes, and looked good out there. He scored 7 points, on 3-for-4 shooting, and only had 1 foul.

[Colin Castleton](#) played 13 minutes, and did a decent job. He scored 4 points and had (team-high) 9 rebounds.

Who Looked Not-So-Good?

Wagner only had 4 points, on 2-for-4 shooting. We've seen him score 21 points against similar competition. Michigan will need his scoring going forward.

[David DeJulius](#) only had 3 points, on 1-for-5 shooting (1-for-3 from 3-point range).

[Adrien Nuñez](#) had 6 points, but needed 7 shots to get them. He shot 2-for-7 overall, 2-for-5 from 3-point range.

Who Else Played?

[C.J. Baird](#) played for 4 minutes, but didn't score.

[Cole Bajema](#) had 2 points.

[Jaron Faulds](#) had 2 points.

[Rico Ozuna-Harrison](#) played for 2 minutes, but didn't score.

[Luke Wilson](#) hit his only shot attempt, a 3-pointer, for his first career points.

Who Didn't Play?

As mentioned above, Livers was injured and didn't play.

What Does It Mean?

This was a meaningless game. Michigan was heavily favored to win, and they did the job. It's hard to learn anything from a game against such an overmatched opponent.

Mid-Term Grades

Michigan has played 13 games, with 18 left in the regular season, so this is pretty close to the halfway point. Time for mid-term grades.

Freshman Eligibility

[Cole Bajema](#) (Inc.) – Cole has only played in 6 games so far, and scored 18 points. He has looked like a freshman out there.

[Jaron Faulds](#) (Inc.) – Jaron has only played in 3 games so far, and scored 4 points. He's on the practice squad, and only plays in "garbage time".

[Franz Wagner](#) (B) – Franz missed the first 4 games of the season with a broken wrist, but he has played pretty well since his return. He has a nice 3-point stroke, but his 3-point shooting percentage should be better (10-for-34 = 29.4%).

Sophomore Eligibility

[Colin Castleton](#) (B) – Colin has had a few good games (Appalachian State, Houston Baptist, and Iowa State), and several 0-4 point games (the rest). His defense has improved, but his offense is still inconsistent.

[David DeJulius](#) (B+) – David is one of the most improved players on the team. He's had 6 games in double figures, and a couple more with 9 points. He's shooting a nice percentage from 3-point range (18-for-43 = 41.9%), and he's done a good job on defense. He even plays a little point guard every now and then.

[Brandon Johns, Jr.](#) (B) – Brandon is another player who has improved a lot from last season. He's playing with a lot more confidence. He's only had one game in double figures (Iowa), but he's contributed in other ways, including rebounding and defense.

[Adrien Nuñez](#) (C-) – Adrien still hasn't turned the corner. He got his chances early, when he started the first 4 games in place of the injured Franz Wagner, and he didn't really contribute much. He's supposed to be one of the better 3-point shooters on the team, but so far he's only 9-for-31 (29.0%).

Junior Eligibility

[C.J. Baird](#) (Inc.) – C.J. has only played in 4 games so far, and scored 7 points. He’s on the practice squad, and only plays in “garbage time”.

[Eli Brooks](#) (A-) – Eli is the other candidate for “most improved player”. He’s had 7 games in double figures, including a couple 24-point performances (Appalachian State and North Carolina). He’s averaging 11.5 points per game, and shooting a nice percentage from 3-point range (25-for-53 = 47.2%).

[Austin Davis](#) (C+) – Austin has played better so far this season than the rest of his career, but he’s still a “project”. There are some things he does well, like defense, rebounding, and dunking, and other things that he’s still working on, like mid-range shooting and passing. The biggest improvement has been that he’s cut way down on his silly fouls.

[Isaiah Livers](#) (A) – Isaiah is the most versatile player on the team, and arguably the most valuable. When he went out with a groin injury, he led the team in scoring (13.6 points/game) and 3-point shooting percentage (29-for-58 = 50.0%). Hopefully, he won’t miss too many games with his injury.

[Rico Ozuna-Harrison](#) (Inc.) – Rico has only played in 3 games so far, and scored 2 points. He’s on the practice squad, and only plays in “garbage time”.

[Luke Wilson](#) (Inc.) – Luke has only played in 4 games so far, and scored 3 points. He’s on the practice squad, and only plays in “garbage time”.

Senior Eligibility

[Zavier Simpson](#) (A) – Zavier is the undisputed leader of this team, and he’s done a good job at it. He’s had 6 games in double figures scoring, and 5 games in double figures for assists. He’s even shooting a nice percentage from 3-point range (12-for-30 = 40.0%).

[Jon Teske](#) (A) – Jon has gotten better every season, and he’s playing very well this season. He’s scored in double figures every game except 2 (Houston Baptist and Oregon), and he’s had double-digit rebounds in 4 games. He hasn’t found his 3-point stroke yet this season (7-for-26 = 26.9%), but he hits enough of them to keep the opposing centers honest.

What’s Next?

This week, Michigan only plays one game, but it’s a big one. On Sunday (01/05/2020, 1:30/4:30 p.m., CBS), they play at (#14) [Michigan State](#).

MSU is currently 10-3 (2-0 in the Big Ten), with a few big wins ([#12] Seton Hall, Georgia, and UCLA), a couple understandable losses ([#2] Kentucky and [#10] Duke), and one embarrassing loss (Virginia Tech). They started the season ranked #1, but have underperformed so far. They have some height (a 7’0” guy and a 6’11” guy), and one star (Cassius Winston). They are always tough at home, especially when Izzo intimidates the refs. Michigan is going to have to play very well to win this one.

Check back next week to see how Michigan did.

Go Blue!