

Nothing But 'Net – Week #16 – 02/10/2020 – A Tough Loss, And A Glorious Victory

The University of Michigan men's basketball team played two games this week, both at home, and they lost one and won the other. [On Tuesday \(02/04/2020\), they lost to Ohio State 61-58](#), then [on Saturday \(02/08/2020\), they beat \(#16\) Michigan State 77-68](#). The loss and win leave Michigan with a record of 14-9 (5-7 in the Big Ten). Michigan is still tied for 11th place in the Big Ten.

What Happened?

The OSU game was close and exciting for the first 39 minutes and 27 seconds, then the refs hijacked it and gave it to OSU. Michigan had a slow start, and OSU led 16-7 with 8:52 to go in the 1st half. Yes, that means that Michigan scored 7 points in the first 11 minutes. Ouch. They finally woke up, and actually grabbed the lead, 22-21, with 3:31 left in the half. OSU took the lead back, and led by 1 point (28-27) at halftime. Michigan got the lead back to start the 2nd half (30-28 at the 17:53 mark), then the lead seesawed back and forth, with neither team able to get more than 3-4 points ahead. Michigan trailed by 1 point (57-56) with 33 seconds left, when the refs took over. [Zavier Simpson](#) drove to the basket, and was fouled hard. As he fell to the floor, he grabbed the jersey of the OSU player who fouled him. The refs called a shooting foul on the OSU player, which was correct, then called a "flagrant 1" foul on Simpson for grabbing the jersey, which was BS. Simpson made both free throws, so Michigan momentarily led 58-57, but the OSU player got to shoot 2 free throws for the flagrant foul, and then OSU got the ball. With only 33 seconds left, Michigan was forced to foul intentionally, and OSU made their free throws. Still, UM had a last shot to tie it up, but they missed. The "flagrant 1" call ruined the game.

Actually, the officiating for the OSU game was terrible the whole game, but the "flagrant 1" call was the icing on the cake. The OSU players were traveling all over the place, and refs missed it. The refs also allowed a lot of pushing and shoving both ways and didn't call it. It was a really poor job.

"Never interrupt your enemy when he is making a mistake." - Napoleon Bonaparte

The popular narrative is that MSU coach Tom Izzo is a coaching god, one of the all-time greats, a master tactician, but he sure wasn't any of those things in this game. He's got one of the best players in the country (Cassius Winston) on his team, but Izzo subbed him out repeatedly for the weakest point guard in the Big Ten, Foster Loyer. Loyer played 10 minutes, sometimes along with Winston, but often with Winston on the bench, and he did nothing but foul: 0-1 shooting, 1 rebound, 4 fouls. I can't believe Izzo actually recruited this guy, and I can't believe he actually plays him in a non-cupcake game. But, "never interrupt your enemy when he is making a mistake". Sparty on, Tom.

Thanks in part to Loyer's "contributions", Michigan led almost the entire game. It was 0-0 for quite a while, before MSU took their only lead of the game, 1-0, with 17:30 to go. Michigan went up 3-1 at the 16:41 mark, then MSU tied it 3-3 with 15:53 to go. It was still 3-3 at the 13:53 mark, which means a combined 6 points scored in 6+ minutes. Wow. Michigan took the lead back for good at this point, with a 3-pointer, and hit 2 more 3-pointers in the next 2:31 to go up 12-3 at the 11:22 mark. At this point, State had 3 points in 8 minutes and 38 seconds. Impressive! Both teams finally started scoring, and the UM lead was in the 5-7 point range for most of the half. It got as high as 10 points (25-15) with 5:06 left in the half, and should have been 8 points (29-21) at halftime, but Michigan committed a dumb foul with 1 second left that gave MSU 2 free points, so it was 29-23 at halftime. Michigan kept the lead in the 4-6 point range for the first few minutes of the 2nd half, then MSU made their move. They got within 1 point several times (31-30, 33-32, 36-35, and 39-38), and were within 2 points (42-40) with 13:27 left in the game. That was their last gasp, though, as Michigan pushed the lead back up to 8 points (48-40) at the 12:09 mark, and kept it in the 8-10 point range the rest of the way. The closest State got was 6 points (72-66) with 40 seconds left, but Michigan made enough free throws to win comfortably. It was a great win over a ranked team.

Let's have a little talk about sportsmanship. I usher sections 209 and 210 in Crisler Arena, and there were a fair number of State fans in both sections. When it became obvious that Michigan was going to win, the State fans started leaving early, usually with their heads down as they headed for the exits. Most of them had behaved just fine, with the occasional "Go Green", but nothing objectionable. Then there was the State fan sitting in Section 210, Row 22, Seat 1: he got more and more agitated as the game went on, and he really didn't like it when the Maize Rage started their "Little Brother" chant. When he and his female companion got up to leave with 22 seconds left, he threw his drink cup at me, walked over and got in my face, then punched me in the stomach and hustled for the exit. I was more stunned than hurt, but it sure surprised me. He never said a word, just punched and ran. So, I notified my supervisor and filed a police report, but I doubt anything will come of it. I'd like to see him banned from coming back to Crisler, if the authorities can identify him. He was a big guy (6'3", 230 pounds), about 55-60 years old, with short gray hair. If you think you know him, send me a message (dmontag@umgoblue.com), and I'll pass it on to the police.

Stats

[The stats for the OSU game](#) are confusing. Michigan shot poorly overall (20-for-60 = 33.3%), but they shot 3-pointers decently (10-for-31 = 32.3%), and they shot free throws very well (8-for-9 = 88.9%). They won the rebounding battle handily (42-31), but they lost the turnover battle (12-8). These stats are good enough to win most games, and they might have won this one if the refs hadn't hijacked it.

[The stats for the MSU game](#) are pretty good. Michigan shot just OK overall (24-for-64 = 37.5%), they shot 3-pointers pretty well (11-for-28 = 39.3%), and they shot free throws well enough to win (18-for-23 = 78.3%). They won the rebounding battle (46-40), but lost the turnover battle (10-7). Michigan won this game because they controlled the boards and shut down MSU's 3-point shooting (6-for-23 = 26.1%).

Who Started?

The starters for the OSU game were [Eli Brooks](#), [Brandon Johns, Jr.](#), [Zavier Simpson](#), [Jon Teske](#), and [Franz Wagner](#). Johns started in place of [Isaiah Livers](#), who missed 3 more games because of a groin injury. Livers was healthy enough to start in place of Johns in the MSU game.

Who Looked Good?

Simpson was the leading scorer in both games, with 15 and 16 points. He also had 5 and 8 assists, and 7 and 4 rebounds. He had a very good week shooting 3-pointers: 3-for-7 and 4-for-7.

Brooks almost hit double figures in both games, with 8 and 11 points, including two big 3-pointers in the MSU game. He had a rough week shooting: 3-for-12 (2-for-8 from deep) vs. OSU, and 2-for-10 (2-for-5 from deep) vs. MSU. He did a nice job guarding Winston in the MSU game.

I'm still not sure whether Wagner looked "good" or "not-so-good". On the one hand, he almost hit double figures in both games (8 and 8), and he was the leading rebounder in the OSU game (14). On the other hand, his shooting percentages continue to trend downward: 2-for-12 (2-for-8 from deep) vs. OSU, and 2-for-5 (0-for-2 from deep) vs. MSU. He is a key component in the offense, and he needs to start hitting his 3-pointers.

Livers looked good in the one game he played (MSU): 14 points on decent shooting (5-for-10, 2-for-5 from deep).

Johns had a solid week, with 8 and 7 points. He shot 3-pointers well, just not often enough: 2-for-3 vs. OSU, and 1-for-2 vs. MSU.

[David DeJulius](#) had a pretty good week, with 5 and 10 points. He played some solid defense against Winston in the MSU game.

[Austin Davis](#) continued his strong play this week. He scored a career-high 11 points (on 4-for-4 shooting) vs. OSU, and chipped in 4 more points (on 2-for-3 shooting) vs. MSU. He played very good post defense, without committing silly fouls.

Who Looked Not-So-Good?

Teske had a quiet week, with 3 and 7 points. He did have 6 and 8 rebounds.

[Colin Castleton](#) only played in the OSU game, and failed to score.

Who Else Played?

No one else played.

Who Didn't Play?

As mentioned above, Livers was injured and didn't play in the OSU game.

[Adrien Nuñez](#) didn't play in either game.

The practice squad ([C.J. Baird](#), [Cole Bajema](#), [Jaron Faulds](#), [Rico Ozuna-Harrison](#), and [Luke Wilson](#)) didn't play in either game.

What Does It Mean?

Michigan kind of held even this week. They should have won the OSU game, but it was an upset that they beat MSU. These results helped their chances for making the NCAA or NIT Tournaments, but didn't change much in the Big Ten race; they're still in 11th place, and they still stand no chance of contending for the title. It would be nice if they could move up to 10th place or better, so they won't have to play on Wednesday in the Big Ten Tournament. There are 8 games left in the regular season, and they need to win at least 6 of them to make the NCAA Tournament, or 2 of them to make the NIT Tournament.

What's Next?

This week, Michigan plays two games, one on the road and one at home. On Wednesday (02/12/2020, 9:00 p.m. EST, BTN), they play at [Northwestern](#), then on Sunday (02/16/2020, 1:00 p.m., CBS), they play [Indiana](#) in Crisler Arena.

Northwestern is currently 6-16 (1-11 in the Big Ten). They are all alone in last (14th) place. They have a few quality wins (Providence, Bradley, and Boston College), but have lost to the likes of Merrimack, Radford, and Hartford. They have some height (three 6'10" players), but no real star. This is another rare opportunity for Michigan to win a true road game, but they'll have to play well.

Indiana is currently 15-8 (5-7 in the Big Ten). They are tied with Michigan for 11th place in the Big Ten standings. They have impressive wins over (#17) Florida State, UConn, Notre Dame, (#11) Ohio State, and (#11) Michigan State. Their significant losses are to Wisconsin, Maryland (twice), Rutgers, Penn State, and Purdue. They have some height (one 6'11" player and one 6'10" player), and no real star. This is another game that Michigan can win, if they play well.

Check back next week to see how Michigan did.

Go Blue!

