

Nothing But 'Net – Week #18 – 02/24/2020 – Two Huge Road Wins

The University of Michigan men's basketball team played two games this week, both on the road, and they won both of them. [On Wednesday \(02/19/2020\), they beat Rutgers 60-52](#) in Piscataway (NJ), then [on Saturday \(02/22/2020\), they beat Purdue 71-63](#) in West Lafayette (IN). The two wins raise Michigan's record to 18-9 (9-7 in the Big Ten). Michigan is now in 7th place in the Big Ten.

What Happened?

These were two very impressive wins. Rutgers had been undefeated (17-0) at home so far this season, and Michigan has always had a tough time winning at Purdue, so both games were far from a sure thing. Michigan played well in both games, and deserved to win them both.

After their traditional slow start, Michigan finally pulled ahead of Rutgers 8-6 with 16:03 left in the 1st half. They pushed the lead as high as 8 points (16-8) at the 13:03 mark, then let Rutgers climb back into the lead, 22-21 with 7:05 to go in the half. The lead went back and forth for the rest of the half, with Rutgers hitting a 3-pointer at the buzzer to lead 31-28 at halftime. Did I mention slow starts? That applies to the 2nd half as well: Rutgers went on a 6-0 run to start the 2nd half, making it 37-28 with 17:40 to go. It took Michigan all the way to the 10:07 mark to finally pull ahead, 42-41. They never trailed again, getting the lead as high as 9 points a couple times, and winning by 8.

Michigan had a much better start in the Purdue game, leading 3-2 at the 18:11 mark. Purdue went ahead by 2-4 points for a couple minutes, then UM went back ahead 10-9 with 12:50 to go. Purdue took the lead for the last time (11-10) with 11:26 left in the half, and then Michigan went ahead for good 12-11 at the 10:12 mark. Michigan slowly pushed the lead up to 15 points, which is where it stood at halftime (36-21). Michigan kept the lead in the 13-15 point range for most of the 2nd half, but Purdue finally got it down to 8 points a few times, although that was as close as they got, with Michigan winning by 8 points.

Stats

[The stats for the Rutgers game](#) are solid, but nothing special. Michigan shot fairly well overall (21-for-47 = 44.7%), they didn't shoot 3-pointers very well (6-for-23 = 26.1%), and they shot free throws decently (12-for-18 = 66.7%). They lost the rebounding battle (37-34) and the turnover battle (10-9). They won the game with defense, holding Rutgers to 22-for-63 (34.9%) overall shooting, 3-for-18 (16.7%) from 3-point range.

[The stats for the Purdue game](#) are worse than the Rutgers stats. Michigan shot poorly overall (25-for-65 = 38.5%), they shot 3-pointers poorly (6-for-25 = 24.0%), and they shot free throws poorly (15-for-23 = 65.2%). They lost the rebounding battle (45-39), but they did win the turnover battle (3-12). Once again, they won the game with defense.

Who Started?

The starters for the Rutgers game were [Eli Brooks](#), [Brandon Johns, Jr.](#), [Zavier Simpson](#), [Jon Teske](#), and [Franz Wagner](#). Johns started in place of [Isaiah Livers](#), who was injured, again. Fortunately, he was recovered from his injury by the Purdue game, so he started in that game instead of Johns.

Who Looked Good?

Wagner was the only Michigan player to hit double figures in both games, with 12 points vs. Rutgers and (team high) 22 points vs. Purdue. He finally shot a good percentage from 3-point range (3-for-5) in the Purdue game, but had a rough time from deep in the Rutgers game (1-for-6). He was the leading rebounder in the Rutgers game, with 8.

Livers looked good in the one game he played (Purdue), with 19 points and 6 rebounds. He didn't shoot very well (5-for-11, 1-for-5 from deep), but he did shoot free throws well: 8-for-8.

Simpson had one good game (team high 16 points vs. Rutgers) and one bad game (4 points vs. Purdue). He actually played pretty well in the Purdue game, except for his shooting: 0-for-10 overall, 0-for-5 from 3-point range, and 4-for-8 shooting free throws.

Teske had one mediocre game (5 points vs. Rutgers) and one decent game (11 points vs. Purdue). He needs to get his offensive game going again.

Brooks didn't hit double figures in either game (9 and 4 points), but he played well. He missed most of the 2nd half of the Purdue game with a nose injury.

[David DeJulius](#) played well off the bench, scoring 10 and 6 points.

[Austin Davis](#) continued to play well, although not as well as the past few weeks: 2 and 3 points.

[Colin Castleton](#) only played in the Rutgers game, and he did well, with 5 points and 4 rebounds.

Who Looked Not-So-Good?

[Brandon Johns, Jr.](#) had a lousy week, with 1 and 2 points.

[Adrien Nuñez](#) only played in the Rutgers game, and failed to score.

Who Else Played?

As mentioned above, Livers didn't play in the Rutgers game, due to injury.

Who Didn't Play?

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?

This was another good week for Michigan. After a terrible start (0-5) in true road games, Michigan has now won 4 true road games in a row. They have won their last 5 games in a row, and 7 out of their last 8 games. These results have helped their chances for making the NCAA Tournament greatly. There are 4 games left in the regular season, and they need to win at least 2 of them to make the Big Dance.

What's Next?

This week, Michigan plays two games, one at home and one on the road. On Thursday (02/27/2020, 7:00 p.m., ESPN2), they play [Wisconsin](#) in Crisler Arena, then on Sunday (03/01/2020, 4:00 p.m., CBS), they play at (#25) [Ohio State](#).

This is Michigan's only game against Wisconsin this season. Wisconsin is currently 17-10 (10-6 in the Big Ten), tied with 3 other teams for 2nd place. They have beaten Ohio State (twice), Penn State, and Maryland, but they have lost to St. Mary's, Richmond, New Mexico, Purdue, and Minnesota. They have a lot of height (two 7'0" players, a 6'11" player, and a 6'10" player), and a couple stars (D'Mitrik Trice and Brad Davison). They are tough at home (13-1), but not so much on the road (4-6). Michigan can certainly beat them, but they'll have to play the way they've been playing lately to do it. Anything less than their "A" game won't cut it.

Michigan has already played, and lost to, OSU this season. Back on 02/04/2020, OSU won in Crisler 61-58. That was the game where the refs called a "flagrant 1" on Simpson with 33 seconds left, handing the game to OSU. Since then, OSU has gone 3-2, with wins over Rutgers, Purdue, and Maryland, and losses to Wisconsin and Iowa. They are now 18-9 (8-8 in the Big Ten), in 10th place. They still have the Wesson boys, and they're still going to be tough to beat, especially in Columbus. However, if Michigan can play the way then did vs. Rutgers and Purdue, they stand a fighting chance.

Check back next week to see how Michigan did.

Go Blue!