

Nothing But 'Net – Week #07 – 01/04/2021 – Happy New Year

The (#16) University of Michigan men's basketball team played two games this week, and they won both of them. [On Thursday \(12/31/2020\), they beat Maryland 84-73](#) in College Park, MD, then [on Sunday \(01/03/2021\), they beat \(#19\) Northwestern 85-66](#) in Crisler Arena. Michigan's record is now 9-0 (4-0 in the Big Ten). Michigan is all alone in 1st place in the Big Ten standings.

What Happened?

Yes, Michigan played a game in College Park, MD on New Year's Eve. At least they won, and they looked good doing it, so it was a Happy New Year. Michigan led for the entire 1st half, by as many as 10 points, but they just couldn't shake Maryland. Maryland had the best half of 3-point shooting I have ever seen. They shot 9-for-11, which kept them in the game. Michigan had led by 7 points (44-37) with 2:55 left in the half, but Maryland closed the half on a 7-2 run, to pull within 2 points at halftime, 46-44. Maryland hit another 3-pointer to start the 2nd half, and they had their first lead, 47-46, with 18:31 to go. They pushed their lead up to 4 points (54-50) with 15:04 left, before Michigan got going, pulled ahead, and never trailed again. Michigan got the lead as high as 19 points (82-63) with 3:52 left, and coasted to an 11-point win. It was Michigan's best game of the season, to that point.

As good as the Maryland game was, the NW game was even better. It didn't start out well, with NW scoring the first 6 points, but once Michigan got going, they pulled into the lead and never looked back. NW was up 8-2 with 16:28 left in the 1st half, when UM ripped off 7 straight points to go up 9-8, with 14:57 to go. NW made a basket to get the lead back for the last time, 10-9, at the 14:36 mark, and then it was all Michigan. They went ahead, and pushed the lead up to 10 points (26-16) with 8:30 to go in the half. NW snuck back to within 5 points (34-29) with 2:56 left, but Michigan made back-to-back-to-back 3-pointers to push the lead back up to 14 points at halftime, 43-29. NW started the 2nd half with a 5-2 run, to get within 11 points (45-34), but that was as close as they got. Michigan pushed the lead up into the 20s, and flirted with 30. The scrubs came in for the last 4 minutes, and the final margin of victory was "only" 19 points, but it could have been 40.

Keep in mind that this is the same Northwestern team that dominated Michigan State a couple weeks ago, beating them by 25 points in East Lansing.

Stats

[The stats for the Maryland game](#) are very nice. Michigan shot very well overall (30-for-51 = 58.8%), they shot 3-pointers decently (6-for-19 = 31.6%), and they shot free throws very well (18-for-20 = 90.0%). They won the rebounding battle (29-23), and tied the turnover battle (12-12). They won this game with overall shooting.

[The stats for the NW game](#) are also very nice. Michigan shot pretty well overall (32-for-64 = 50.0%), they shot 3-pointers very well (12-for-27 = 44.4%), and they shot free throws well enough (9-for-14 = 64.3%). They crushed NW on the boards (42-28), but they lost the turnover battle (12-10). Michigan won this game with 3-point shooting and rebounding.

Who Started?

The starters were [Eli Brooks](#), [Hunter Dickinson](#), [Isaiah Livers](#), [Mike Smith](#), and [Franz Wagner](#).

Who Looked Good?

Dickinson is the man. He was the leading scorer in both games, with a new career-high 26 points vs. Maryland, and 19 points vs. NW. He also had 11 rebounds in the Maryland game, for another double-double. Even more impressive, he shot 10-for-11 in the Maryland game, and 8-for-12 in the NW game. He was awesome.

Welcome back, Herr Wagner. After a slow start in the first 6 games, he has come alive in the last 3. He had double figures in both games, with 19 points vs. Maryland, and 14 points vs. NW. He also had 10 rebounds vs. NW, for his first double-double of the season. On top of that, he had 5 assists, 5 blocked shots (career high), and 2 steals vs. NW. He did it all.

Brooks had a very good week, with double figures in both games. He had 10 points vs. Maryland, and 14 vs. NW. He had a tough time with his 3-point shot vs. Maryland (0-for-4), but made up for it vs. NW (4-for-5).

Smith had one good game (14 points vs. Maryland), and one so-so game (5 points vs. NW). He did have 6 assists in each game, and he ran the offense well.

Livers also had one good game (10 points vs. NW), and one so-so game (7 points vs. Maryland).

[Chaundee Brown, Jr.](#) had one very good game (14 points vs. NW), and one lousy game (0 points vs. Maryland). When he's on his game, he's a great spark off the bench.

[Brandon Johns, Jr.](#) didn't score a lot of points this week (6 vs. Maryland, 5 vs. NW), but he did a nice job giving Dickinson a rest. He also hit a nice 3-pointer vs. NW.

Who Looked Not-So-Good?

[Terrance Williams II](#) didn't play vs. Maryland, and didn't score vs. NW.

Who Else Played?

The 3 scholarship players who aren't part of the main rotation ([Jace Howard](#), [Zeb Jackson](#), and [Adrien Nuñez](#)) all played at the end of the NW game. Howard scored his first Michigan points, with a basket, and Jackson made his first Michigan basket. Nuñez missed his only shot.

A couple of the scout team players ([C.J. Baird](#) and [Jaron Faulds](#)) played at the end of the NW game. They shot a few times, but didn't score.

Who Didn't Play?

[Austin Davis](#) is still out with his foot injury.

The rest of the scout team players ([Rico Ozuna-Harrison](#), [Brandon Wade](#), and [Luke Wilson](#)) didn't play this week.

What Does It Mean?

The good news is: Michigan is the only undefeated team in the Big Ten, they're 4-0 in league play, and they're all alone in 1st place in the league standings. They're one of four undefeated teams left in the nation.

The bad news is: Michigan has a tough stretch of schedule coming up, starting this week. Maybe it's not bad news, maybe it's an opportunity to knock off some of the other good teams in the Big Ten.

At this point, Michigan is playing as well as they did last season in the Battle 4 Atlantis tournament, when they knocked off two Top-10 teams in two days. We shall see if they can keep it up.

What's Next?

This week, Michigan plays two games, one at home and one on the road. On Wednesday (01/06/2021, 8:30 p.m., BTN), they play at home vs. (#21) [Minnesota](#), then on Saturday (01/09/2021, 2:15 p.m., BTN), they play at [Penn State](#).

Minnesota is currently 10-2 (3-2 in Big Ten). They beat (#4) Iowa, (#17) Michigan State, and (#25) Ohio State at home, but they lost to (#13) Illinois and (#6) Wisconsin on the road. They don't have any superstars on their roster, but they do have a seven-footer. This will be another tough game, given who Minnesota has already beaten.

Penn State is currently 3-4 (0-3 in Big Ten). Michigan already played, and beat, PSU earlier this season (12/13/2020) in Crisler Arena. PSU also lost to (#18) Illinois and Indiana since their game against Michigan. Michigan matched up well against PSU last time, but it's always tough to win on the road in the Big Ten.

Go Blue!