

Nothing But 'Net – Week #09 – 01/18/2021 – A Tale Of Two Blowouts

The (#7) University of Michigan men's basketball team played two games this week, and they won one and lost the other. [On Tuesday \(01/12/2021\), they beat \(#9\) Wisconsin 77-54](#) in Crisler Arena, then [on Saturday \(01/16/2021\), they lost at \(#23\) Minnesota 75-57](#). Michigan's record is now 11-1 (6-1 in the Big Ten). Michigan is now tied for 1st place in the Big Ten standings with Iowa.

What Happened?

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times. The Wisconsin game was the best game Michigan has played this season, and the Minnesota game was the worst. Everything went right in the Wisconsin game, and everything went wrong in the Minnesota game. While the first loss of the season is always tough to process, I don't want to skip over the big win over Wisconsin too quickly. If Michigan can get back to the form they showed in that game, they will be able to win the tough games on the road against ranked opponents.

The Wisconsin game was close early, with Wisconsin actually leading once (5-4 with 17:42 left in the 1st half), and a tie score (15-15) with 12:13 to go. That's when Michigan went out ahead for good. The score was still close (26-23) with 6:19 to go, and then Michigan went on a 14-0 run to end the half, up 40-23. Wisconsin scored the first 3 points of the 2nd half, to make it 40-26 with 19:42 left in the game. They didn't score again for over 7 minutes, as Michigan went on another big run, 22-0, to put the game away. At that point, the score was 62-29, and Michigan pushed the lead as high as 40 points (69-29) with 10:43 to go. Wisconsin managed to make the score look more respectable, mostly against the Michigan scrubs, but it was a dominant victory.

As good as Michigan looked against Wisconsin, that's how bad they looked against Minnesota. Michigan never led, and the closest they got to challenging Minnesota was within 3 points (24-21) with 2:32 to go in the 1st half. They let Minnesota go on a 6-2 run to end the half, and never really challenged Minnesota in the 2nd half. The lead grew as high as 23 points, before ending up at 18 points. It was very disappointing.

Stats

[The stats for the Wisconsin game](#) are excellent. Michigan shot well overall (32-for-62 = 51.6%), they shot 3-pointers very well (9-for-16 = 56.3%), and they were perfect from the line (4-for-4 = 100.0%). They won the rebounding battle handily (42-34), and won the turnover battle (8-10). Michigan won this game with 3-point shooting.

[The stats for the Minnesota game](#) are terrible. Michigan shot poorly overall (22-for-56 = 39.3%), they shot 3-pointers terribly (6-for-22 = 27.3%), and they shot free throws horribly (7-for-14 = 50.0%). They actually won the rebounding battle (39-35), but they lost the turnover battle miserably (20-9). They lost this game with poor shooting and turnovers.

Who Started?

The starters for the Wisconsin game were [Eli Brooks](#), [Hunter Dickinson](#), [Isaiah Livers](#), [Mike Smith](#), and [Franz Wagner](#). [Chaundee Brown, Jr.](#) started in place of Brooks in the Minnesota game, since Brooks had a minor foot injury.

Who Looked Good?

Most of the starters looked good in the Wisconsin game, but almost no one looked good in the Minnesota game.

It was back-to-Earth time for Dickinson. He had a good game against Wisconsin (12 points, 6 rebounds, 0 turnovers), but he was badly outplayed by the Minnesota center (Liam Robbins,

with 22 points), with only 9 points and 5 turnovers. This ended Dickinson's streak of double figures in the first 11 games.

Livers was the only player to hit double figures in both games, with 13 against Wisconsin and 11 against Minnesota.

Wagner had a good game vs. Wisconsin (15 points) and a mediocre game vs. Minnesota (8 points). He shot well against Wisconsin (7-for-10 overall, 1-for-2 from deep), but poorly against Minnesota (3-for-9 overall, 0-for-4 from deep).

Brown had a decent game vs. Wisconsin (7 points) and a good game vs. Minnesota (14 points). He was the leading scorer in the Minnesota game.

[Austin Davis](#) returned to action after missing 6 games due to a foot injury. He looked fine out there, scoring 4 points vs. Wisconsin and 6 points vs. Minnesota.

Who Looked Not-So-Good?

Smith was the leading scorer in the Wisconsin game (16 points), but he was horrible in the Minnesota game (0 points on 0-for-6 shooting).

Brooks had a lousy game vs. Wisconsin (5 points), and didn't play in the Minnesota game.

[Brandon Johns, Jr.](#) had a lousy week, with 3 points vs. Wisconsin and 0 points vs. Minnesota. His points in the Wisconsin game were from a 3-pointer.

[Terrance Williams II](#) played in both games, with 0 points vs. Wisconsin and 3 points vs. Minnesota.

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 both games:

- Howard had 0 points vs. Wisconsin, but hit his first career 3-pointer vs. Minnesota.
- Jackson hit a basket vs. Wisconsin and a free throw vs. Minnesota.
- Nuñez didn't shoot in either game.

A couple players from the scout team ([C.J. Baird](#) and [Jaron Faulds](#)) played at the end of one of the games:

- Baird didn't play in the Wisconsin game, but hit 2 free throws in the Minnesota game.
- Faulds played in the Wisconsin game, but didn't shoot. He didn't play in the Minnesota game.

Who Didn't Play?

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

What Does It Mean?

The win was a big win, and the loss was just one loss. It was very unlikely that Michigan was going to go undefeated for the season, and now that the win streak is over, they can truly settle down to "one game at a time". They're in the heart of a good title chase, and they've shown that they can play well and beat good teams. They've also seen what can happen if they don't play well. Until they beat a ranked team on the road, we're going to have to hold our breath for those games.

What's Next?

This week, Michigan plays two games, one at home and one on the road. On Tuesday (01/19/2021, 7:00 p.m., FS1), they play at home vs. [Maryland](#), then on Friday (01/22/2021, 7:00 p.m., FS1), they play at [Purdue](#).

Maryland is currently 8-6 (2-5 in Big Ten). [Michigan played them in College Park back on New Year's Eve \(12/31/2020\) and beat them 84-73](#). Since then, they have lost to Indiana and (#5) Iowa, and beaten (#12) Illinois. If Michigan can beat them at their place, they should be able to handle them at home, but we shall see if Michigan's first loss has any effect.

Purdue is currently 10-5 (5-3 in Big Ten). They have impressive wins over (#20) Ohio State, (#23) Michigan State, and Indiana, and not-so-impressive losses to Miami (FL), (#14) Rutgers, and (#15) Illinois. They have an All Big Ten-caliber player (Trevion Williams) and the tallest player in the Big Ten (Zach Edey, 7'4"). This will be a big challenge for Michigan, especially on the road. Michigan has not done well in Mackey Arena in the past.

Go Blue!