

Nothing But 'Net – Week #03 – 11/15/2021 – A Strong Start

The (#6) University of Michigan men's basketball team played two games this past week, and they won them both. [On Wednesday \(11/10/2021\), they beat Buffalo 88-76](#) in Crisler Arena, then [on Saturday \(11/13/2021\), they beat Prairie View A&M 77-49](#) in Washington, DC. The two wins start Michigan off with a record of 2-0.

What Happened?

Michigan was expected to win both of these games, and they did. In fact, they started strong in both games, and never trailed in either game. In the Buffalo game, Michigan opened up a double-digit lead (19-9) at the 14:07 mark, and kept the lead in the 10-13 point range for the next few minutes. They finally started to pull further away at the 8:48 mark (33-19), and got the lead up to 20 points (39-19) with 6:22 left in the half. The lead was still 20 points (51-31) with 0:53 left in the half, when Buffalo scored the last 5 points of the half to cut the halftime lead to 15 points, 51-36. The second half did not start well, and Buffalo crept to within 7 points (56-49) with 15:41 left in the game. Michigan pushed the lead back up to 13 points (64-51) with 13:38 to go, but Buffalo hung around, getting to within 5 points (72-67) at the 6:00 mark. Fortunately, that was as close as they got. Michigan closed out the game with a 16-9 run, to win by 12 points, 88-76.

This was a chippy, choppy game. The refs were "whistle-happy", and called 46 fouls in 40 minutes of play, 23 against each team. Because of all the whistles, there was no flow to the game. There were several scuffles, which resulted in 6 technical fouls called, 3 on each team. It was not a thing of beauty, but it was a solid win.

The PVAMU game was much smoother. Once again, Michigan opened up a double-digit lead pretty quickly: 19-7 with 13:19 to go in the 1st half. Once again, they built the lead up to almost 20 points: 28-9 with 8:57 left. They got the lead as high as 26 points (42-16) at the 3:30 mark, then let PVAMU score the last 7 points of the half, to make it a 19-point lead (42-23) at halftime. PVAMU scored first in the 2nd half, to get within 16 points (42-26), and that was it for them. UM went on a 9-0 run to push the lead back up to 25 points (51-26) with 16:05 to go, and never let the lead get under 22 points the rest of the way. [Coach Howard](#) put in some subs in the final minutes, and Michigan coasted to the victory.

Stats

The [game stats for the Buffalo game](#) were pretty good, with one exception. Michigan shot well overall (32-for-59 = 54.2%), they shot 3-pointers pretty well (6-for-15 = 40.0%), but they shot free throws poorly (18-for-30 = 60.0%). They won the rebounding battle (39-37), but they lost the turnover battle (10-9). They won this game with good overall shooting, but they almost lost it with poor free throw shooting.

The [game stats for the PVAMU game](#) were actually worse than the Buffalo stats. Michigan shot decently overall (25-for-55 = 45.5%), they shot 3-pointers decently (10-for-29 = 34.5%), and they shot free throws horribly (17-for-32 = 53.1%). They crushed PVAMU on the boards (52-32), but lost the turnover battle again (20-16). They won this game with defense, holding PVAMU to 27.0% shooting (17-for-63). Once again, terrible free throw shooting hurt them.

Who Started?

The starters were [Eli Brooks](#), [Hunter Dickinson](#), [Caleb Houston](#), [Brandon Johns, Jr.](#), and [DeVante' Jones](#).

Who Looked Good?

Dickinson was the star this week, with a team-high 27 points vs. Buffalo, and 11 points vs. PVAMU. He also had 10 rebounds in the PVAMU game, for his first double-double of the

season. Even better, he hit the first 3-pointer of his Michigan career in the PVAMU game, after going 0-for-4 from deep last season.

Brooks hit double figures in both games, with 11 points vs. Buffalo, and a team-high 15 points vs. PVAMU. So far, he's shooting a nice percentage from 3-point range: 1-for-2 vs. Buffalo, and 3-for-5 vs. PVAMU, for a combined 4-for-7.

Houstan also hit double figures in both games, with 11 and 13, respectively. He isn't shooting a great percentage from 3-point range (2-for-4 and 3-for-8 = 5-for-12), but his five 3-pointers lead the team.

Jones hit double figures in the PVAMU game (10 points), but only had 7 points vs. Buffalo. He did a nice job running the offense, with 5 assists (and only 1 turnover) in each game.

[Terrance Williams II](#) was the only sub to hit double figures, with 15 points vs. Buffalo. He had 8 points vs. PVAMU. He also snagged 7 and 5 rebounds. He's shooting a nice percentage from 3-point range (2-for-3 and 1-for-3 = 3-for-6). He definitely brings energy to the team when he's out there, but he's also still kind of a loose cannon, playing just a little too fast and out of control sometimes.

[Moussa Diabate](#) didn't hit double figures in either game (7 and 6 points), but he did bring lots of energy to the team when he was out there. He is easily the most athletic player on the team, and his 7'6" wingspan really helps on defense. He had 5 and 8 rebounds this week.

[Kobe Bufkin](#) played in both games, scoring 0 and 8 points. He only played 4 minutes against Buffalo, but he played 17 minutes in the PVAMU game.

Who Looked Not-So-Good?

Johns hasn't had a good game yet. He played 23 minutes vs. Buffalo and 22 minutes vs. PVAMU, and only scored 5 and 2 points. He did grab 6 rebounds vs. PVAMU, but the rest of his game has been lacking.

Who Else Played?

[Adrien Nuñez](#) played in both games, for 8 and 5 minutes, respectively. He scored 5 and 1 points.

[Frankie Collins](#) returned to action from his injury, and played in both games. He played 7 and 6 minutes, and scored 0 and 1 points.

[Jaron Faulds](#) played for 3 minutes in the PVAMU game, and scored 2 points.

[Jace Howard](#) played for 6 minutes in the PVAMU game, but missed all 3 of his shots, all 3-point attempts.

Who Didn't Play?

[Isaiah Barnes](#), [Zeb Jackson](#), and [Will Tschetter](#) are the scholarship players who didn't play in either game. Jackson has an unspecified illness. I don't know why Barnes and Tschetter didn't get in

[Ian Burns](#) and [Brandon Wade](#) are on the scout team, so they're a lower priority for minutes.

What Does It Mean?

Buffalo is a good team, picked to win the MAC this season, with a couple pretty big, pretty good big men. They were a good warm-up for Michigan. PVAMU was overmatched, so we can't learn much from dismantling them.

One thing we learned for sure is that Michigan needs to work on their free throws. Their poor free throw shooting didn't hurt them much in the PVAMU game, since they had such a big lead, but they almost lost the Buffalo game due to bad free throw shooting, and they could easily lose a game or two in the Big Ten due to that.

What's Next?

This week, Michigan plays three games. On Tuesday (11/16/2021, 9:00 p.m., FS1) they play Seton Hall in Crisler Arena, then on late Friday night/early Saturday morning (11/20/2021, 12:30 a.m. EST, ESPN) they play UNLV in Las Vegas, NV, and finally on Sunday (11/21/2021, 9:30 p.m./12:00 a.m. EST, ESPN/ESPN2) they play either Arizona or Wichita State in Las Vegas, NV.

[Seton Hall](#) was 14-13 last season, 10-9 in the Big East. They lost all their games against ranked opponents, they lost in the 2nd round of their conference tournament, and they didn't play in any post-season tournaments. They are picked to finish 5th in the Big East this season. They picked up Bryce Aiken from Harvard in the transfer portal. He was one of the players Michigan was interested in before last season. Other than that, they don't have any noteworthy players. They have as much height as Michigan (a 7'2" center, and a couple 6'10" forwards), so Dickinson and Diabate could have their hands full.

This game is part of the [Gavitt Tipoff Games](#), essentially the Big East/Big Ten Challenge. Michigan has a special history with Seton Hall, since [Michigan beat Seton Hall 80-79 in overtime to win their first National Championship on 04/03/1989](#) in Seattle, WA. The two teams have met only one other time, the next season, when UM beat SHU again, this time 91-86 on 12/23/1989 in Las Vegas, NV. It should be a very intense game.

[UNLV](#) was 12-15 last season, 8-10 in the Mountain West. They didn't play any ranked teams, they lost in the 2nd round of their conference tournament, and they didn't play in any post-season tournaments. They don't have any noteworthy players, but they do have some height (a 7'1" center and a 6'10" forward). This is a game that Michigan should win handily.

This game is part of the [Roman Main Event](#) holiday tournament, held in [T-Mobile Arena](#) in Las Vegas, NV. After not going to a holiday tournament last season, it's nice that Michigan is going to one this season.

The other two teams in the Roman Main Event are Arizona and Wichita State. They are both teams with a rich basketball heritage. As recently as 2017, Arizona was a Sweet Sixteen team, and Wichita State was a Sweet Sixteen team in 2015. In fact, Wichita State was in Atlanta in 2013 for the Final Four, along with Michigan, Syracuse, and Louisville.

[Arizona](#) was 17-9 last season, 11-9 in the Pac-12. Their only win over a ranked opponent was against USC. Due to a self-imposed ban on post-season play, they didn't play in their conference tournament or any other post-season tournaments. They don't have any noteworthy players, but they have plenty of height: a 6'10" forward, a 6'11" forward, a 7'0" center, and a 7'1" center. Dickinson and Diabate will be very busy if UM plays them. Arizona isn't ranked, but they're in the "Also Received Votes" list. This could be a very challenging game.

[Wichita State](#) was 16-6 last season, 11-2 in the AAC (American Athletic Conference). Their only win over a ranked opponent was against Houston. They were a "First Four" team in the NCAA Tournament, losing to Drake. They don't have any noteworthy players, and they don't have much height (a 6'11" forward). Michigan would prefer to play them instead of Arizona.

Check back next week to find out what happened and why.

Go Blue!