

Nothing But 'Net – Week #04 – 11/22/2021 – Overrated

The (#4) University of Michigan men's basketball team played three games this past week, and they won one and lost two of them. [On Tuesday \(11/16/2021\), they lost to Seton Hall 67-65](#) in Crisler Arena, [on Saturday \(11/20/2021\), they beat UNLV 74-61](#) in Las Vegas, NV, and [on Sunday \(11/21/2021\), they lost to Arizona 80-62](#) in Las Vegas. The Seton Hall game was part of the [Gavitt Tipoff Games](#), and the two games in Las Vegas were part of the [Roman Main Event](#) holiday tournament. The one win and two losses leave Michigan with a record of 3-2.

What Happened?

Michigan looked weak against Seton Hall, decent against UNLV, and pathetic against Arizona. They are seriously overrated. They will certainly drop a long way in the polls, possibly all the way out. Based on their performance this week, they don't deserve to be ranked.

No one expected Michigan to go undefeated this season, but it still would have been nice to win a few more games before that first, sad loss. The Seton Hall game felt like a March Madness game, but the officials weren't in March Madness form. With competent officiating, Michigan would have beaten SHU by about 10 points, but the refs on Tuesday had other ideas.

The game was close for the whole 1st half, with neither team able to build up a lead of more than 3 points. Michigan finally got ahead by 5 points (31-26) with 0:40 left in the half, then SHU cut it to 3 (31-28) before halftime. The 2nd half was better, and UM pulled out to a 10-point lead (39-29) with 17:18 to go. They inched the lead up to 11 points (45-34) at the 14:41 mark, and still had it at 9 points (55-46) with 8:46 to go. SHU kept chipping away at the lead, and tied the game at 57-57 with 4:30 left. It was still tied (64-64) with 0:32 left, when SHU went ahead for the first time in a long time. The final seconds were exciting, but Michigan couldn't make the key baskets or free throws, and lost by 2. It was a sad display of lousy officiating, especially in the last 3:00.

The UNLV game was much better. After some early choppiness, the game was tied (15-15) with 11:27 left in the 1st half. At that point, Michigan went ahead, and never trailed again. They got the lead as high as 12 points (35-23) with 2:57 to go, then let UNLV go on a 9-0 run to finish the half, with the lead down to 3 points (35-32). UNLV tied the score early in the 2nd half (35-35, with 19:49 left), and tied it again (40-40) with 17:15 left, but they never got ahead. After the second tie score, Michigan went ahead and stayed ahead, pushing the lead up to 11 points (58-47) with 9:29 to go. UNLV did get within 6 points (65-59) with 3:08 left, but that was as close as they got. Michigan made the winning baskets, stops, and free throws down the stretch. It was a good, solid win against a capable team playing (essentially) at home.

The Arizona game was very sad. Arizona pushed Michigan around, and made UM look foolish. They had way too much height for Michigan, and they used it very effectively, with lots of alley-oop dunks. The game was actually close for a while, but once Arizona started pulling away, Michigan was powerless to slow them down. Michigan actually led, 16-12, at the 11:58 mark, and again, 20-19, with 7:57 to go in the 1st half, but once Arizona took the lead, they never looked back. They led by 8 points (37-29) at halftime, and pushed the lead up into the 15-17 point range for most of the 2nd half. It was a dominant performance by Arizona.

Stats

[The game stats for the SHU game](#) are pretty sad. Michigan shot poorly overall (26-for-62 = 41.9%), they shot 3-pointers terribly (3-for-15 = 20.0%), but they did shoot free throws well (10-for-12 = 83.3%). They won the rebounding battle (39-33), and tied in the turnover battle (11-11). They lost this game with poor 3-point shooting, along with bad officiating.

[The game stats for the UNLV game](#) are much better. Michigan shot pretty well overall (26-for-51 = 51.0%), they shot 3-pointers reasonably well (6-for-19 = 31.6%), and they shot free

throws well enough (16-for-21 = 76.2%). They won the rebounding battle (33-24), but they (barely) lost the turnover battle (12-11). They won this game with rebounding and defense, holding UNLV to 39.7% shooting (25-for-63).

[The game stats for the Arizona game](#) are embarrassing. Michigan shot poorly overall (23-for-53 = 43.4%), they shot 3-pointers horribly (1-for-14 = 7.1%), and they shot free throws respectably (15-for-22 = 68.2%). They lost the rebounding battle (34-29) and the turnover battle (15-10). They lost this game with poor shooting, poor rebounding, and poor defense.

Who Started?

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

Who Looked Good?

Dickinson hit double figures in all 3 games: 18 vs. Seton Hall, 13 vs. UNLV, and 11 vs. Arizona. He also got some rebounds: 9, 7, and 7, respectively. He didn't play like an All-American, but he did OK.

Brooks also hit double figures in all 3 games: 17, 22, and 14. He tried his best to keep Michigan in the losing games, but there's only so much he can do by himself.

Jones hit double figures in one game, came close in another, and did OK in the 3rd game: 11, 9, and 6. The surprising stat is his rebounding in the Seton Hall game: 12 rebounds, for a double-double.

Johns didn't hit double figures in any of the 3 games, but he did score a few points: 6, 7, and 7. He hit Michigan's only 3-pointer in the Arizona game. Yay?

[Moussa Diabate](#) was the only other player to hit double figures in at least one game. He had 14 points vs. UNLV. The other 2 games were weak: 1 point vs. Seton Hall, and 4 points vs. Arizona. He did grab a few rebounds: 2, 7, and 5.

[Kobe Bufkin](#) played in all 3 games, and scored a few points: 4, 2, and 3.

Who Looked Not-So-Good?

Houston had a dismal week, with 4, 5, and 6 points. His shooting has been terrible: 1-for-9 vs. Seton Hall, 1-for-8 vs. UNLV, and 2-for-8 vs. Arizona. That's a combined 4-for-25 (16.0%). His 3-point shooting is even worse: 0-for-4, 1-for-5, and 0-for-5, for a combined 1-for-14 (7.1%).

[Terrance Williams II](#) also had a dismal week, with 4, 2, and 5 points. He also shot terribly this week: 1-for-5, 0-for-3, and 2-for-5, for a combined 3-for-13 (23.0%).

Who Else Played?

[Isaiah Barnes](#) played in the Arizona game, but didn't attempt a shot.

[Frankie Collins](#) played in the Arizona game, and scored 2 points.

[Jaron Faulds](#) played in the Arizona game, and scored 2 points.

[Jace Howard](#) played in the Arizona game, and scored 2 points.

[Adrien Nuñez](#) played in the Arizona game, but didn't attempt a shot.

Who Didn't Play?

[Zeb Jackson](#) and [Will Tschetter](#) are the scholarship players who didn't play in any of the games. Jackson has an unspecified illness. I don't know why 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?

The loss to Seton Hall was unfortunate, but the loss to Arizona was a disaster. UM sure didn't look like a Final Four team. They didn't even look like an NCAA Tournament team. If they continue to play like they did this week, they are going to finish in the bottom half of the Big Ten standings, and miss the Big Dance.

One thing that is becoming clear is that Michigan needs more production from their wings/forwards. Among the mainstream players, the big men (Dickinson and Diabate) seem pretty solid, the guards (Brooks, Jones, and Bufkin) seem to be doing pretty well, but the forwards (Houston and Johns) are struggling. The other forward (Williams) is up and down.

The other thing that is becoming clear is that Michigan's vaunted recruiting class is not as strong as expected. Diabate has been mostly good, and Bufkin has shown flashes of brilliance, but Houston has been a disappointment. Collins and Barnes haven't played much, and Tschetter hasn't played at all. Hopefully, the freshmen will start to contribute more in the remaining non-conference games, so that they'll be ready to chip in some minutes and points during the Big Ten schedule.

I've said it before, and I'll say it again: when Michigan hits their 3-pointers, they look good and win. When they can't hit their 3-pointers, everything falls apart. Look at this week: in their one win, they shot reasonably well from deep (6-for-19 = 31.6%), but in the two games they lost, they shot very poorly (3-for-15 = 20.0% and 1-for-14 = 7.1%). Most of these 3-point attempts were open, they just aren't going in. Fix that up, and Michigan will look much better.

What's Next?

This week, Michigan only plays one game. On Wednesday (11/24/2021, 7:00 p.m., BTN) they play Tarleton State in Crisler Arena.

[Tarleton State](#) was 10-10 last season, 5-7 in the Western Athletic Conference (WAC). They didn't play any ranked teams, and they didn't play in a conference tournament or any post-season tournaments. This season, they are 1-3. They don't have any noteworthy players, and they don't have any height (a pair of 6'9" forwards). This should be an easy win for Michigan. They need it.

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

Go Blue!