

Nothing But 'Net – Week #05 – 11/29/2021 – A Pre-Thanksgiving Turkey

The (#20) University of Michigan men's basketball team played one game this past week, and they won it. [On Wednesday \(11/24/2021\), they beat Tarleton State 65-54](#) in Crisler Arena. The win raises Michigan's record to 4-2.

What Happened?

The TSU game was held the night before Thanksgiving, and it was a turkey. Michigan played down to the competition, and turned what should have been a blowout into a close, competitive game. Michigan has a much bigger, more talented lineup, but they let TSU set the pace, and they played a sloppy, uneven game because of it.

The early going was sloppy, and the score was still tied (12-12) with 12:43 to go in the 1st half. Michigan opened up a slim 2-4 point lead for the next few minutes, but only led by 1 point (21-20) at the 5:17 mark. They closed the half out strong, with a 10-2 run, to lead by 9 points (31-22) at halftime. TSU cut the lead to 7 points (31-24) to start the 2nd half, but Michigan quickly pushed the lead up into double digits, and led by 16 points (40-24) with 17:21 to go. TSU chipped away at the lead, but UM still led by 11 points (52-41) at the 8:32 mark. TSU went on an 8-0 run, to cut the lead to only 3 points (52-49) with 6:06 to go. That was as close as they got, but they sure did give UM a scare.

Stats

[The game stats](#) are respectable. Michigan shot pretty well overall (21-for-38 = 55.3%), they shot 3-pointers decently (6-for-18 = 33.3%), and they shot free throws well enough (17-for-22 = 77.3%). They won the rebounding battle (37-21), but lost the turnover battle horribly (21-9). The main reason this game was so close was all the UM turnovers. Look at the overall shooting: only 38 shots in a 40-minute game. They had so many empty trips down the floor where they never even got a shot off. TSU sped them up, and they responded by throwing the ball away.

Who Started?

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

Who Looked Good?

Brooks continues to be the most consistent player on the team. He was the high scorer for Michigan, with 15 points. Of course, he took 12 shots to get those 15 points (4-for-12 overall, 3-for-9 from 3-point range). He also had 5 turnovers, against 3 assists.

Houston finally contributed, with 14 points and 10 rebounds, for his first career double-double. He shot a decent percentage: 4-for-7 overall, 2-for-5 from deep.

Dickinson almost had a double-double, with 9 points and 10 rebounds. He should have had 20+ points against a much smaller TSU lineup, but UM had a terrible time getting the ball into him at the post. He only took 6 shots.

[Moussa Diabate](#) was the star of the game, with 14 points and 7 rebounds off the bench. He shot 6-for-7, with his only miss on his only 3-point attempt.

[Frankie Collins](#) played 15 minutes, and scored 6 points on 2-for-2 shooting, including 1-for-1 from 3-point range, and a free throw. He did a nice job running the offense when he was in, with 4 assists against 1 turnover.

Who Looked Not-So-Good?

Jones had a miserable game, with 0 points (on 0 shots) and 5 turnovers against 1 assist. He was worthless out there.

Johns had a weak game, with 5 points, but 3 turnovers.

[Terrance Williams II](#) played for 12 minutes, and scored 2 points, on free throws.

Who Else Played?

[Adrien Nuñez](#) played for 3 minutes, and missed his only shot attempt for 0 points.

Who Didn't Play?

[Isaiah Barnes](#), [Kobe Bufkin](#), [Zeb Jackson](#), [Jace Howard](#), and [Will Tschetter](#) are the scholarship players who didn't play. Jackson has an unspecified illness. I don't know why the others didn't get in. I guess the game was too close.

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

What Does It Mean?

Michigan continues to look weak and uninspired. Maybe it was because they took TSU too lightly. Maybe it was because they were looking ahead to the Thanksgiving break. Whatever the reason, they need to work out the problems and start playing sharp basketball. They have the components on the team to do well, they just need to get the chemistry thing worked out.

At this point, I'd say that Michigan is "on the bubble" for making the NCAA Tournament. The way they've been playing, they will be lucky to win even 10 games in the Big Ten. That won't get them in the Big Dance.

What's Next?

This week, Michigan plays two games. On Wednesday (12/01/2021, 9:15 p.m., ESPN) they play at North Carolina, then on Saturday (12/04/2021, 1:00 p.m., CBS) they play San Diego State in Crisler Arena. The UNC game is part of the ACC/Big Ten Challenge.

[North Carolina](#) is currently 4-2, with no impressive wins, and losses to Purdue and Tennessee. They have one noteworthy player (center Armando Bacot, Jr.), and some height (Bacot is 6'10", and another guy is 6'11"), so Michigan's big men will be busy again. If this game were in Ann Arbor or at a neutral site, it would be a toss-up, but playing at UNC is tough. Michigan will have to play their best game of the season so far to win this one.

[San Diego State](#) is currently 4-2, with wins over Arizona State and Georgetown, and losses to BYU and USC. They were very good last season (23-5), and they look pretty good again this season. For many years, they were coached by our old friend Steve Fisher, and now the head coach is Brian Dutcher, who was an assistant coach at UM for 10 seasons under Fisher. SDSU doesn't have any nationally known players, but they do have decent height (a pair of 6'10" guys). This should be a very challenging non-conference game.

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

Go Blue!