

Nothing But 'Net – Week #06 – 12/06/2021 – A Tale Of Two Hunters

The (#24) University of Michigan men's basketball team played two games this past week, and they won one and lost one. [On Wednesday \(12/01/2021\), they lost at North Carolina 72-51](#), then [on Saturday \(12/04/2021\), they beat San Diego State 72-58](#) in Crisler Arena. The win and the loss leave Michigan with a record of 5-3.

What Happened?

This is [Hunter Dickinson](#)'s team. If he has a lousy game, the team is not going to stand a very good chance of winning, especially against a very good team like North Carolina on the road. Hunter looked slow, sluggish, and disinterested in the UNC game, and the team followed him down the drain. Fortunately, he woke up and played a solid, aggressive game against SDSU, and the team rallied around him.

The UNC game was very close for the whole 1st half, with Michigan actually leading for much of the half. With 2:52 left in the half, Michigan had their biggest lead of the half, 27-22. Unfortunately, they let UNC go on a 7-0 run to end the half, so UNC led by 2 at halftime, 29-27. Michigan tied the game in the opening seconds of the 2nd half, then they fell apart. UNC just kept increasing their lead, pushing it up to 25 points before cruising to a 21-point win. Michigan never really challenged UNC in the last 10 minutes. It was sad.

The SDSU was close for the first 9 minutes, with SDSU clinging to a 1-point lead (13-12) at the 11:16 mark. At that point, Michigan went on a 14-3 run to open up a 10-point lead (26-16) with 8:36 to go in the half. Michigan kept the lead in the 7-9 point range for a while, and still led by 9 (30-21) at the 5:36 mark. That's when Michigan went cold and SDSU got hot. The Aztecs went on a 13-3 run, to go up 1 point (34-33) with 0:18 left in the half. Fortunately, Dickinson hit a 3-pointer (!) with 0:04 to go, and Michigan led at halftime, 36-34. SDSU tied the game early in the 2nd half, then Michigan took control of the game. They led by as many as 21 points, before settling for a 14-point win.

Stats

[The game stats for the UNC game](#) are sad. Michigan shot very poorly overall (20-for-57 = 35.1%), they shot 3-pointers pretty poorly (5-for-16 = 31.3%), but they did shoot free throws perfectly (6-for-6 = 100.0%). They lost the rebounding battle by a little (38-35), but they lost the turnover battle by a lot (13-6). They lost this game with poor shooting and turnovers.

[The game stats for the SDSU game](#) are better. Michigan shot pretty well overall (28-for-60 = 46.7%), they shot 3-pointers very well (11-for-20 = 55.0%), but they shot free throws pretty poorly (5-for-11 = 45.5%). They won the rebounding battle (36-33) and the turnover battle (13-16). They won this game with 3-point shooting.

Who Started?

The starters were [Eli Brooks](#), [Moussa Diabate](#), [Hunter Dickinson](#), [Caleb Houston](#), and [DeVante' Jones](#). Diabate started in place of [Brandon Johns, Jr.](#), who wasn't contributing much.

Who Looked Good?

Brooks continues to be the most consistent player on the team. He was the only player to hit double figures in both games, with 11 points vs. UNC, and 10 points vs. SDSU. He didn't shoot a very good percentage (5-for-11 vs. UNC, and 3-for-11 vs. SDSU).

Remember when I talked about "a tale of two Hunters"? Here are his stats: 2-for-5, for 4 points, vs. UNC, and 10-for-16, for 23 points, vs. SDSU. He also had 14 rebounds vs. SDSU, for another double-double. Remember when I said that he hit a 3-pointer just before halftime in the SDSU game? It gets better than that: he actually was 3-for-3 from 3-point range in the

SDSU game! Last season, he was 0-for-4 from 3-point range; this season, he's shooting 4-for-8. It's a great addition to his game.

Houstan is getting more comfortable out there. He almost hit double figures in both games, with 8 points vs. UNC, and a career-high 17 points vs. SDSU. He's starting to hit his 3-pointers: 2-for-4 vs. UNC, and 4-for-5 vs. SDSU.

Diabate was the leading scorer for Michigan vs. UNC, with 13 points, but he was limited to 2 points in only 7 minutes of action against SDSU. He started the SDSU game, but left the game after only 7 minutes and didn't return. Apparently, he felt ill, a non-injury issue. His status going forward is unknown.

[Frankie Collins](#) has been getting more playing time, and may soon replace Jones as the starting point guard. He scored a few points this week (4 and 8) and he played a lot of minutes (12 and 24).

Who Looked Not-So-Good?

Jones had a mediocre week, with 4 points in each game. He just isn't working out.

Johns also had a mediocre week, with 5 and 3 points.

[Terrance Williams II](#) played in both games, and scored 0 and 5 points.

Who Else Played?

[Isaiah Barnes](#) played for 3 minutes in the UNC game, but didn't attempt a shot.

[Kobe Bufkin](#) played for 3 minutes in the UNC game, and scored 2 points.

[Jaron Faulds](#) played for 3 minutes in the UNC game, but didn't attempt a shot.

[Zeb Jackson](#) played for 3 minutes in each game, but didn't score.

Who Didn't Play?

[Jace Howard](#), [Adrien Nuñez](#), and [Will Tschetter](#) are the scholarship players who didn't play.

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

What Does It Mean?

It's obvious that Michigan was seriously overrated at the start of the season, and I bought into the hype. This is not looking like a Big Ten title contender, and not even like an upper division team. At this point, I'd say the ceiling is 10-10 in the league, and maybe a First Four bid to the NCAA Tournament.

The team has problems at point guard, shooting guard, and center, and they are very young at forward. Jones is not working out at point guard, and the other options are either young (Bufkin and Collins) or not a true point guard (Brooks and Jackson). Brooks is OK in his role as shooting guard, but he has no capable backup. Dickinson is great at center when he's "on", but the team is helpless when he's "off". Diabate is very talented at forward, but doesn't play like a big man when he's spelling Dickinson at center. He's more of a finesse player than a "banger". Houston is steadily improving at forward, but he and Diabate are both very young and inexperienced. Johns and Williams aren't contributing much.

I understand that this is a young team, and that they could start getting better as the season progresses. At this point, they are just looking young.

What's Next?

This week, Michigan plays two games. On Tuesday (12/07/2021, 7:00 p.m. EST, ESPN2) they play at Nebraska, then on Saturday (12/11/2021, 6:30 p.m., FS1) they play Minnesota in Crisler Arena.

[Nebraska](#) is currently 5-4 overall (0-1 in Big Ten). They have no impressive wins, and losses to Southern Illinois and Creighton. They don't have any noteworthy players, but they do have some height: a 6'10" freshman, a 6'11" freshman, and a 7'0" freshman. This is a game that Michigan should be able to win, if they stay focused.

[Minnesota](#) is currently 7-0 overall (0-0 in Big Ten). Other than beating Pittsburgh, they don't have any noteworthy wins. They don't have any noteworthy players, and they only have one tall player, a 6'11" freshman. This is another game that Michigan should be able to win, especially at home.

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

Go Blue!