

Nothing But 'Net – Week #07 – 12/13/2021 – The Lowering Of Raised Expectations

The University of Michigan men's basketball team played two games this past week, and they won one and lost the other. [On Tuesday \(12/07/2021\), they beat Nebraska 102-57](#) in Lincoln (NE), then [on Saturday \(12/11/2021\), they lost to Minnesota 75-65](#) in Crisler Arena. The win and the loss leave Michigan with a record of 6-4 (1-1 in Big Ten).

What Happened?

The Nebraska win was impressive and encouraging, but the Minnesota loss showed the ugly truth: this Michigan team is a long way from the promise they showed in preseason predictions. It's time to (significantly) lower the high expectations from the beginning of the season. Sorry.

The Nebraska game was very smooth and low-stress. Michigan never trailed, and once they broke the tie at 13-13 with 13:56 to go in the 1st half, they led the rest of the way. In the 1st half, they pushed the lead up into the 18-20 point range, and kept it there, leading by 19 points (51-32) at halftime. The beginning of the 2nd half was more of the same, with the lead still in the 18-20 point range until the 11:22 mark, when Michigan pushed it up into the 20s and 30s for the rest of the game. [Coach Howard](#) emptied the bench for the final 5:00, and the subs did a nice job of keeping the lead in the 30s.

The Minnesota game was miserable. Minnesota was picked universally as the sure-thing last place team in the Big Ten this season, and they made Michigan look silly out there. The game was close and tight for the entire first half, with neither team getting ahead by more than 6 points. It was all tied up (30-30) with 2:03 to go in the half, when Michigan went on a nice 6-2 run to end the half, up by 4 (36-32). The 2nd half was a disaster. Minnesota scored 7 straight points to go up by 3 (39-36) at the 17:29 mark, and they never trailed again. Michigan did get within 1 point (41-40) with 15:23 to go, but then Minnesota pulled off a 6-point possession on a foul off the ball during a made 3-pointer, which gave them the ball for a second 3-pointer. That was the deciding play of the game. It gave Minnesota all the momentum they would need to hold off Michigan. Minnesota had hot shooting in the 2nd half (16-for-25 = 64.0%) and Michigan was cold (11-for-26 = 42.3%). It was miserable.

Stats

[The game stats for the Nebraska game](#) are very nice. Michigan shot well overall (39-for-76 = 51.3%), they shot 3-pointers very well (15-for-32 = 46.9%), and they shot free throws well enough (9-for-12 = 75.0%). They won the rebounding battle decisively (54-38), but they lost the turnover battle (12-9). They won this game with 3-point shooting. They'll win just about every game where they make 15 3-pointers on less than 40 attempts.

[The game stats for the Minnesota game](#) are terrible. Michigan shot poorly overall (26-for-55 = 47.3%), they shot 3-pointers very poorly (3-for-18 = 16.7%), and they shot free throws poorly (10-for-16 = 62.5%). They won the rebounding battle (34-28), but they lost the turnover battle (8-4). They lost the game with poor 3-point shooting. They'll lose just about every game where they make less than five 3-pointers.

Who Started?

The starters for the Nebraska game were [Eli Brooks](#), [Hunter Dickinson](#), [Caleb Houston](#), [Brandon Johns, Jr.](#), and [DeVante' Jones](#). Johns started in place of [Moussa Diabate](#), who was out with the flu. He was back as a starter for the Minnesota game.

Who Looked Good?

Dickinson played well in both games, scoring 15 and 19 points. He also had 12 and 10 rebounds, for two double-doubles. He even hit another 3-pointer, against Nebraska. He did his part.

Brooks continues to be the most consistent player on the team. He hit double figures in both games, with 10 points vs. Nebraska, and 12 points vs. Minnesota. He didn't shoot a very good percentage (3-for-10 vs. Nebraska, and 5-for-14 vs. Minnesota).

Houston actually had a pretty good week, with 16 points vs. Nebraska and 8 points vs. Minnesota. He shot well in the Nebraska game (6-for-9), but not so much in the Minnesota game (2-for-7).

Diabate played pretty well in his one game this week, with 7 points and (a career-high) 13 rebounds.

Johns had a real Jekyll-and-Hyde week, with 20 points (tying his career high) vs. Nebraska and 0 points on 0 shots in 13 minutes vs. Minnesota. He was brilliant in the Nebraska game, and lousy in the Minnesota game.

[Terrance Williams II](#) also had a Jekyll-and-Hyde week, with 22 points (a career high) vs. Nebraska and 0 points vs. Minnesota. Just like Johns.

Jones was yet another player who had a Jekyll-and-Hyde week, but with a twist: he had a lousy game scoring (3 points on 1-for-5 shooting) vs. Nebraska, and a good game scoring (14 points on 6-for-12 shooting) vs. Minnesota. On the positive side, he had 11 assists for the week (8 vs. Nebraska, 3 vs. Minnesota), against 0 turnovers.

Who Looked Not-So-Good?

[Frankie Collins](#) had a mediocre week, with 2 and 5 points.

Who Else Played?

[Kobe Bufkin](#) played for 11 minutes in the Nebraska game, and scored 5 points.

[Ian Burns](#) played for 1 minute in the Nebraska game, but didn't attempt a shot.

[Jaron Faulds](#) played for 7 minutes in the Nebraska game, and scored 4 points.

[Zeb Jackson](#) played for 15 minutes in the Nebraska game, and scored 5 points.

Who Didn't Play?

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

[Brandon Wade](#) also didn't play in either game. He's on the scout team, so he's a lower priority for minutes.

What Does It Mean?

The Minnesota loss is devastating, but it's still only one loss. The important thing is to not let it turn into a losing attitude. This is a young, fragile team. When they're up, they look pretty good, but they have yet to handle any true adversity. If they play the way they did vs. Nebraska, they'll do fine vs. any team left on their schedule. If they play the way they did vs. Minnesota, they could lose to anyone. If the young players on the team continue to grow and improve, by the end of the season this could be a scary-good tournament team that no one wants to face. Or, they could pack it in by mid-February and just play out the string.

What's Next?

This week, Michigan only plays one game. On Saturday (12/18/2021, 7:00 p.m., BTN) they play Southern Utah in Crisler Arena.

[Southern Utah](#) is currently 7-3 (2-0 in the Big Sky). They have no impressive wins, and embarrassing losses to Dixie State University and St. Mary's College of California. They don't have any noteworthy players, but they do have a 6'11" center. This is a game that Michigan should be able to win, if they stay focused.

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

Go Blue!