

## **Nothing But 'Net – Week #11 – 01/10/2022 – More COVID-19 Issues**

The University of Michigan men's basketball team was supposed to play two games this past week, but they only played one, and lost it. [On Tuesday \(01/04/2022\), they lost at Rutgers 75-67](#), while the game scheduled for [Saturday \(01/08/2022\) at home vs. Michigan State was postponed](#), due to COVID-19 issues in the UM program. The loss lowers Michigan's record to 7-6 (1-2 in Big Ten).

### **What Happened?**

The postponement of the MSU game was the most obvious COVID-19 issue, but COVID-19 also played a big factor in the Rutgers loss. Five UM players missed the Rutgers game, four of them due to COVID-19. While none of the missing players were starters, several were key bench players, and UM gave unusual minutes to a couple rarely-used players in their absence.

Before the loss this week, Michigan was a perfect 14-0 vs. Rutgers. That streak ended with a thud. Rutgers watched the video of the Michigan/UCF game from last week, and saw that all they had to do was make three 3-pointers in a row against Michigan and the game would be over. UCF waited until midway through the 2<sup>nd</sup> half to hit their three-in-a-row, but Rutgers hit theirs right out of the gate. They hit their first three 3-point attempts, along with a layup and a free throw, and the score was suddenly 12-4 with 16:00 to go. That was all the lead they needed, winning by 8 points. In between, Michigan never led, and spent most of the game behind by 10-12 points. It was a miserable, depressing performance.

### **Stats**

[The game stats](#) are sad. Michigan shot decently overall (27-for-59 = 45.8%), but they shot terribly from 3-point range (3-for-15 = 20.0%). They shot free throws well enough (10-for-13 = 76.9%), but they lost the rebounding battle (37-32) and won the turnover battle (8-10). Once again, they lost the game due to their bad 3-point shooting and above-average 3-point shooting by Rutgers (11-for-23 = 47.8%). They seem to be doing everything right in defending 3-point shots, but their opponents just have their best 3-point shooting performances vs. Michigan. It's very frustrating.

### **Who Started?**

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

### **Who Looked Good?**

Just like the UCF game, 4 of the 5 starters scored in double figures, led by Dickinson (25), Diabate (15), Houston (12), and Brooks (11). Dickinson in particular did his part, shooting 10-for-16 overall. Diabate also played hard, shooting 6-for-9 overall and grabbing 9 rebounds.

### **Who Looked Not-So-Good?**

Jones had a terrible game, scoring 0 points. He shot 0-for-3 from the floor in 31 minutes of "action".

[Kobe Bufkin](#) also had a lousy game, with 2 points on 1-for-5 shooting (0-for-2 from 3-point range) in 15 minutes of playing time.

### **Who Else Played?**

[Jace Howard](#) scored 2 points in 9 minutes.

[Adrien Nuñez](#) didn't attempt a shot in 4 minutes.

## **Who Didn't Play?**

[Isaiah Barnes](#), [Frankie Collins](#), [Zeb Jackson](#), [Brandon Johns, Jr.](#), [Will Tschetter](#), and [Terrance Williams II](#) are the scholarship players who didn't play. Collins, Johns, and Williams didn't travel with the team, due to COVID-19 issues. Jackson also stayed in Ann Arbor, for "personal" (non-COVID-19) reasons.

[Ian Burns](#), [Jaron Faulds](#), and [Brandon Wade](#) are the scout team players who didn't play. Faulds didn't travel with the team, due to COVID-19 issues.

## **What Does It Mean?**

Losing the Rutgers game is a disaster. If Michigan can't beat Rutgers, there are few possible wins left on the schedule. They could realistically lose the rest of the games on the schedule, although they might sneak out 2-3 more wins. Regardless, they are almost certainly going to miss the NCAA (and NIT) Tournament this season.

## **What's Next?**

This week, Michigan was supposed to play two games, but one of them has already been postponed. [On Tuesday \(01/11/2022\) they were scheduled to play \(#3\) Purdue in Crisler Arena, but that game has been postponed](#) due to continuing COVID-19 issues in the UM program. On Friday (01/14/2022, 9:00 p.m. EST, FS1) they are scheduled to play at Illinois.

[Illinois](#) is currently 11-3 (4-0 in Big Ten). They have solid wins against Kansas State, Notre Dame, Rutgers, Iowa, Missouri, Minnesota, and Maryland, and puzzling losses to Marquette and Cincinnati (by 20 points). They have several noteworthy players: Trent Frazier, Alfonso Plummer, and (especially) Kofi Cockburn. I think Cockburn is the most powerful basketball player I've ever seen in person, and I'm afraid he's going to crush Dickinson. Illinois thrashed Michigan in their only game last season, and they're still upset that Michigan won the Big Ten title over them by winning percentage, not total wins. They'll be out for blood, playing at home in front of a wild and delusional crowd, and Michigan is hurting, both physically and mentally. This game could be a bloodbath.

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

Go Blue!