

Nothing But 'Net – Week #13 – 01/24/2022 – Two Impressive Wins, And Mid-Term Grades

The University of Michigan men's basketball team played two games this past week, and they won both of them. [On Tuesday \(01/18/2022\), they beat Maryland 83-64](#) in Crisler Arena, then [on Sunday \(01/23/2022\), they won at Indiana 80-62](#). The two wins raise Michigan's record to 9-7 (3-3 in Big Ten).

What Happened?

Michigan really needed a win going into the Maryland game, and they got it, comfortably. They led from start to finish, built a solid lead, and held off every Maryland rally. Michigan scored in the first 14 seconds off the opening tip, Maryland tied it 2-2, then Michigan hit a 3-pointer to go ahead for good. They pushed the lead up to double figures (20-9) with 10:59 left in the half, then pushed it up over 20 (35-14) with 3:14 to go. The lead was 20 points (39-19) at halftime, and Michigan kept it in the 18-22 point range for most of the 2nd half. At one point, Maryland crept within 13 points (57-44) with 11:12 left in the game, but Michigan pushed the lead back up to 19 points (63-44) with 9:03 to go, and that was the last gasp for Maryland. [Coach Howard](#) put in the subs for the last 3:00, and they did a fine job protecting the lead.

The win at IU was the most impressive win of the season so far for Michigan. IU was coming off an exciting home victory over (#4) Purdue, and they were undefeated at home. They were fired up, and the game was broadcast nationally on CBS. It didn't look promising for Michigan, but they played their best game of the season, and won convincingly. Michigan trailed 2-0 and 4-2, then they went ahead 6-4 with 16:27 left, and never trailed again. They quickly pushed the lead up to 9 points (14-5) at the 14:38 mark, then up to 16 points (29-13) with 7:16 to go in the half. They let IU whittle the lead down to 8 points (38-30) at halftime, but they pushed it back into double figures (44-34) at the 18:23 mark, and kept it in the 10-12 point range for the rest of the game. IU got within 9 points once (52-43) with 14:14 to go, but that was as close as they got, and Michigan pulled away in the final two minutes to win by 18 points.

Stats

[The stats for the Maryland game](#) are very nice. Michigan shot well overall (35-for-60 = 58.3%), they shot well from 3-point range (8-for-20 = 40.0%), and they were perfect shooting free throws (5-for-5 = 100.0%). They won the rebounding battle handily (32-20), and they won the turnover battle (8-13). They won this game with solid overall and 3-point shooting.

[The stats for the IU game](#) are wonderful. Michigan shot very well overall (29-for-51 = 56.9%), they shot fabulously from 3-point range (11-for-17 = 64.7%), and they shot free throws well enough (11-for-14 = 78.6%). They crushed IU on the boards (36-26), but they did lose the turnover battle (14-8). They won this game with great overall and 3-point shooting.

Who Started?

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

Who Looked Good?

Dickinson was the star of both games, with 21 points vs. Maryland and 25 points vs. IU. He not only scored a lot of points, but he did it with great shooting: 10-for-14 overall (1-for-2 from deep) vs. Maryland, and 9-for-12 (3-for-4 from deep) vs. IU. These are his two best games of the season so far.

Houston had the two best games of the season so far as well. He scored 16 points vs. Maryland and 19 points vs. IU. He also shot well: 6-for-7 overall (3-for-4 from deep) vs. Maryland, and 7-for-12 (5-for-7 from deep) vs. IU.

Diabate also hit double figures in both games, with 14 and 10 points.

Jones almost scored in double figures in both games, with 12 and 7 points. He had 7 assists against 3 turnovers vs. IU.

[Terrance Williams II](#) had one good game (10 points vs. IU) and one sad game (0 points vs. Maryland). He shot 4-for-5 (2-for-2 from deep) vs. IU.

[Brandon Johns, Jr.](#) returned to the lineup in the IU game after missing 3 games due to COVID-19 issues, and he looked good. He scored 5 points, shooting 2-for-2 overall (1-for-1 from deep).

[Frankie Collins](#) also had a decent week, with 6 and 2 points. He's getting better every game at running the point.

[Jace Howard](#) had a nice week, with his best game of the season vs. Maryland (5 points, including a nice 3-pointer), and a minute of mop-up action vs. IU (no shot attempts).

Who Looked Not-So-Good?

What's up with Brooks? He had a mediocre game vs. Maryland (7 points), and a lousy game vs. IU (2 points). He's supposed to be a senior leader at shooting guard.

[Kobe Bufkin](#) had a tough week, with 0 points in both games.

Who Else Played?

[Jaron Faulds](#) played in both games, scoring 2 and 0 points.

Who Didn't Play?

[Isaiah Barnes](#), [Zeb Jackson](#), [Adrien Nuñez](#), and [Will Tschetter](#) are the scholarship players who didn't play.

[Ian Burns](#) and [Brandon Wade](#) are the scout team players who didn't play.

What Does It Mean?

These are two big wins. Sure, Maryland is having a down season, but they came back and beat Illinois handily in the game after they lost big to Michigan. IU is having a good season, and beating them in Bloomington is a big deal.

Is Michigan back "on the bubble" for the NCAA Tournament? Maybe, but they still have a lot of work to do. Was this week just a fluke, or have they turned the corner? We'll see in the next few games. If they can string together 2 or 3 good weeks, then we can start thinking about post-season play.

Mid-Term Grades

With 16 games down, and at least 13 left to go (depending on rescheduling postponed games), it's time for (near) mid-term grades.

[Freshman Eligibility](#)

- [Isaiah Barnes](#) (Inc.) – Isaiah is being voluntarily redshirted, so he has only played in 2 games, and hasn't attempted a shot.
- [Kobe Bufkin](#) (C+) – Kobe has played in 13 games so far, and scored 51 points. He's looked good in a few games (Prairie View A&M, Southern Utah, and Central Florida) and like a freshman in the rest. He missed one game due to COVID-19 issues.
- [Ian Burns](#) (Inc.) – Ian is on the scout team, and has only played 1 minute in 1 game so far, and he hasn't attempted a shot.
- [Frankie Collins](#) (C+) – Frankie has played in 13 games so far, and scored 46 points. He's looked good in a few games (Tarleton State, San Diego State, and Maryland) and like a freshman in the rest. He missed one game due to COVID-19 issues.
- [Moussa Diabate](#) (B) – Moussa has played in 15 games (started 9) and scored 137 points. He has also grabbed 92 rebounds and blocked 11 shots. He is very athletic, and brings lots of energy to the team when he's out there. He also fouls too much.
- [Caleb Houston](#) (B+) – Caleb has started all 16 games this season and scored 164 points. He has had several very good games, and a few very bad games. Even when he has a good game, he's too quiet out there. He needs to show some emotion to get the rest of the team fired up.
- [Will Tschetter](#) (Inc.) – Will is being voluntarily redshirted, and he hasn't played this season.

Sophomore Eligibility

- [Hunter Dickinson](#) (A-) – Hunter's stats are actually up from last season, but it doesn't feel like it. Last season, he played with fire and intensity. This season, he often has a blank look on his face, and he appears disinterested. One aspect of his game is definitely better this season: 3-point shooting. Last season, he was 0-for-4. This season, he's 9-for-23 (39.1%). He missed one game due to COVID-19 issues.
- [Jace Howard](#) (C-) – Jace has played more than expected this season: 7 games, for 42 minutes, scoring 11 points. He even hit a 3-pointer.
- [Zeb Jackson](#) (C-) – Zeb has only played in 4 games, for 35 minutes, and has scored 13 points. Is he still on the team? I'm not sure. He has stayed in Ann Arbor for the last few away games, for "personal" (non-injury, non-COVID-19) reasons.
- [Terrance Williams II](#) (C) – Terrance has played more than expected this season: 15 games (started 1), for 80 points. He's had a couple great games (Buffalo, Nebraska, and Indiana) and a bunch of forgettable games. He missed one game due to COVID-19 issues.

Junior Eligibility

- [Brandon Wade](#) (Inc.) – Brandon is on the scout team, and hasn't appeared in a game yet this season.

Senior Eligibility

- [Eli Brooks](#) (B) – Eli is another player who isn't playing as well as he did last season. He has started every game, and scored 184 points. He started the season well, hitting double figures in the first 10 games, but since then he has been up-and-down. His 3-point shooting percentage is respectable (25-for-69 = 36.2%), but it's really tailed off in the last few games.

- [Jaron Faulds](#) (C) – Jaron has played more than expected, in some cases due to COVID-19 absences. He has played in 8 games, for 36 minutes, and has scored 12 points.
- [Brandon Johns, Jr.](#) (C-) – Brandon has been somewhat of a disappointment this season. As a senior with some starting experience, a lot was expected from him, and he hasn't delivered. In fact, after starting the first 6 games, he lost his starting role to Diabate. He has played in 13 games, and scored 67 points. He has had one good game (Nebraska) and a bunch of forgettable games. He missed 3 games due to COVID-19 issues.
- [DeVante' Jones](#) (B) – DeVante' has started every game this season, and has been the main point guard. He started the season slowly, but has been improving lately. As a point guard, we need to look at his assist/turnover ratio (62/30), which is respectable. His 3-point shooting has been improving, and he's now up to 43.8% (14-for-32).
- [Adrien Nuñez](#) (Inc.) – Adrien has played more than usual this season: 6 games, 26 minutes, 8 points. For someone who was recruited as a 3-point specialist, his numbers are lousy: 1-for-6.

What's Next?

This week, Michigan is scheduled to play two games. On Wednesday (01/26/2022, 6:30 p.m., BTN) they are scheduled to play Northwestern in Crisler Arena, then on Saturday (01/29/2022, 12:30 p.m., CBS) they are scheduled to play at (#14) Michigan State.

[Northwestern](#) is currently 9-8 (2-6 in Big Ten), with impressive wins over Georgia and (#10) Michigan State, and not-so-impressive losses to Providence, Penn State, and Maryland. They have a couple noteworthy players (Boo Buie and Pete Nance) and some height (two 6'10" guys and a 7-footer). This will be a challenging game, since Northwestern was good enough to beat MSU in East Lansing.

[Michigan State](#) is currently 15-3 (6-1 in Big Ten). They have impressive wins over Louisville (ACC/Big Ten Challenge) and (#8) Wisconsin, and 2 of their 3 losses are against (#3) Kansas and (#6) Baylor, with a puzzling loss at home to Northwestern thrown in. They have several noteworthy players (Max Christie, Joey Hauser, Malik Hall, and Gabe Brown), and they have some height (a 7-footer at center). Michigan could get blown out in this one, but they have the talent to hang around and maybe pull off a miracle, they just need to play one of their rare "A" games.

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

Go Blue!