

Nothing But 'Net – Week #16 – 02/14/2022 – Two Out Of Three Ain't Bad

The University of Michigan men's basketball team played three games this past week, and they won two and lost the third. [On Tuesday \(02/08/2022\), they beat Penn State 58-57](#) in State College, [on Thursday \(02/10/2022\), they beat \(#3\) Purdue 82-58](#) in Crisler Arena, and [on Saturday \(02/12/2022\), they lost to \(#16\) Ohio State 68-57](#) in Crisler Arena. The two wins and one loss leave Michigan with a record of 13-10 (7-6 in Big Ten).

What Happened?

This was a very busy week for Michigan, with three games in five days, and they should be mildly pleased with winning two out of three, especially the middle one. Michigan was expected to beat PSU, even on the road, the home game vs. Purdue looked like a very unlikely win, and the home game vs. OSU was a toss-up. Michigan (barely) took care of business in the PSU game, they looked tired and out-of-sorts in the OSU game, but they played their best game in years vs. Purdue.

Any road win in the Big Ten is a good win, and Michigan deserved to win the PSU game. It was a close game for the first 10 minutes, with the teams trading leads. With 10:45 left in the half, Michigan led 19-18, then PSU rattled off a 13-2 run, to lead 31-21 at the 5:10 mark. They still led by 10 (34-24) with 3:30 to go, when Michigan went on a 10-0 run to end the half, tied at 34-34. Michigan never trailed again, but they didn't pull away very far either. Their biggest lead of the 2nd half was 6 points (45-39) with 11:20 to go, but PSU managed to tie it up (48-48) at the 3:37 mark. Michigan led the rest of the way, including a 5-point lead (56-51) with 8 seconds left, but PSU managed to get it down to one point at the buzzer. Still, it was a win, but certainly not a dominating one.

The Purdue game was one of the most surprising results in several seasons. Michigan had just lost to Purdue by 6 points in West Lafayette five days before, so even the most optimistic fans were hoping for a 2-3 point Michigan win in Crisler. Instead, Michigan dominated Purdue from start to finish, and could have won by 35 points if they hadn't put in the scrubs at the end. Purdue led briefly in the first couple minutes, up 4-2 with 18:47 to go in the half. Michigan tied it up (4-4) at the 18:35 mark, then pulled ahead 6-4 with 17:41 left. They pushed the lead as high as 8 points, and still led by 3 points (24-21) with 9:05 to go. Purdue tied it up (24-24) at the 8:16 mark, and that was the last time it was close. Michigan went on a sweet 14-5 run to lead by 9 (38-29) at halftime, and still led by 9 (43-34) with 16:46 left in the game. Once Michigan pushed the lead up into double digits, they kept it there, leading by as many as 29 points (82-53) with 2:23 to go. They put in the scout team against Purdue's starters, and Purdue managed to score the last 5 points to make it look closer than it really was. It was a fabulous win, and the students had a great time storming the court.

After all the excitement and emotion of the big Purdue win, the OSU game felt flat and bloodless. Michigan just couldn't recapture the fire and enthusiasm they showed in the Purdue game, and they went down quietly. They looked tired out there, and they shot poorly. Good players shoot with their legs, and Michigan looked to have tired legs. The teams traded leads for most of the 1st half, with Michigan clinging to a one-point lead (28-27) with 2:10 to go in the half. OSU went on a 6-2 run to end the half up 3 points (33-30). Michigan got within a point (33-32) with 19:04 to go, and that was as close as they got. OSU pushed the lead up into the 7-9 point range, and kept it there. Michigan did manage to get within 5 points (57-52) with 3:20 left, but that was it. OSU pushed the lead back up into double digits, and Michigan fouled them to try to get the ball back, but OSU made their free throws. It was a sad, sorry game.

Stats

[The stats for the PSU game](#) are pretty bad, especially for a win. Michigan shot poorly overall (17-for-54 = 31.5%), they shot 3-pointers poorly (5-for-21 = 23.8%), but they did shoot free throws very well (19-for-22 = 86.4%). They won the rebounding battle (39-30), and tied in

the turnover battle (7-7). They won this game at the free throw line, scoring 19 points to PSU's 6 points (6-for-7).

[The stats for the Purdue game](#) are wonderful. Michigan shot well overall (32-for-62 = 51.6%), they shot 3-pointers very well (12-for-21 = 57.1%), and they shot free throws well, but not enough (6-for-7 = 85.7%). They won the rebounding battle handily (35-25) along with the turnover battle (7-14). They won this game with 3-point shooting. When Michigan shoots over 50% from deep, they're going to win most of the time.

[The stats for the OSU game](#) are mediocre. Michigan shot OK overall (24-for-58 = 41.4%), they shot 3-pointers poorly (4-for-17 = 23.5%), and they shot free throws well, but not enough (5-for-6 = 83.3%). They actually won the rebounding battle (32-26), but they lost the turnover battle (11-8). They lost this game with plain old poor shooting, especially from deep.

Who Started?

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

Who Looked Good?

Once again, Dickinson was the star in the two wins, although he wasn't as sharp in the loss. He scored 19 points vs. PSU, 22 points vs. Purdue, and 14 points vs. OSU. He also had 15 rebounds vs. PSU (tying his career high), for a big "double-double". Even more impressive, he shot 4-for-6 from 3-point range vs. Purdue, a new career high for him in 3-pointers made. He's playing like an All American again.

Brooks appears to be out of his scoring slump. He hit double figures in all 3 games, with 16, 18, and 17 points. He was 4-for-4 from 3-point range in the Purdue game.

Diabate had quiet game vs. PSU (3 points), but he was a huge factor in the Purdue win (15 points), and he almost hit double figures in the OSU game (9 points). Many of his baskets this week were emphatic slam dunks, which fired up the crowd and the team.

Jones only hit double figures in one game (11 points vs. Purdue), but he scored a reasonable number of points in the other two games (7 vs. PSU and 8 vs. OSU), and he contributed in other ways: 5 rebounds and 5 assists vs. PSU, 4 rebounds and 10 assists vs. Purdue (for a double-double), and 10 rebounds and 8 assists vs. OSU. He almost had a triple-double in the OSU game.

Houston had a decent week, with 6, 14, and 5 points. He was very good in the Purdue game, shooting 5-for-10 overall and 4-for-6 from deep, but he kind of disappeared in the other two games. 3 of his 5 points vs. OSU came in the waning seconds when the game was out of reach.

Who Looked Not-So-Good?

[Kobe Bufkin](#) played in all 3 games, but didn't score in any of them.

[Frankie Collins](#) played in all 3 games, and scored 0, 0, and 4 points. He looked OK in the OSU game.

[Brandon Johns, Jr.](#) played in all 3 games, and scored 5, 2, and 0 points. He looked OK in the PSU game.

[Terrance Williams II](#) played in all 3 games, and scored 2, 0, and 0 points.

Who Else Played?

[Ian Burns](#), [Jaron Faulds](#), and [Adrien Nuñez](#) all played in the last 2+ minutes of the Purdue game, but didn't score. Burns took the only shot attempt.

Who Didn't Play?

[Isaiah Barnes](#), [Jace Howard](#), and [Will Tschetter](#) are the scholarship players who didn't play in any of the games.

[Brandon Wade](#) is the only player on the scout team who didn't play in any of the games.

What Does It Mean?

Since Michigan was expected to beat PSU, lose to Purdue, and lose to OSU, this week's results are actually better than expected. The loss to OSU doesn't change things much, but the big win over Purdue nudges Michigan a little closer to "the bubble" for the NCAA Tournament. They still need to win the games they're expected to win, plus they probably need one more upset victory, to get solidly "on the bubble". They showed us in the Purdue game that they can beat anyone in the country when they're "on", but they showed us in the OSU game that they don't have the stamina or firepower to be "on" every game.

What's Next?

After a heavy week with three games, this week Michigan is scheduled to only play two games. On Thursday (02/17/2022, 7:00 p.m. EST, ESPN) they are scheduled to play at Iowa, then on Sunday (02/20/2022, 1:00 p.m. EST, CBS) they are scheduled to play at (#14) Wisconsin.

[Iowa](#) is currently 17-7 (7-6 in Big Ten). They have impressive wins over Virginia and Indiana, and unimpressive losses to Rutgers and Penn State. Thankfully, Luka Garza is gone, but they still have Jordan Bohannon. They do have some height: two 6'11" centers. Every game on the road is tough, especially in the Big Ten, and Michigan doesn't have a very good record in Carver-Hawkeye Arena. This will be a very challenging game.

[Wisconsin](#) is currently 19-5 (10-4 in Big Ten). They have impressive wins over Texas A&M, (#12) Houston, Georgia Tech, Marquette, Indiana, (#3) Purdue, Iowa, (#16) Ohio State, and (#17) Michigan State. They have unimpressive losses to Providence and Rutgers. They have a couple noteworthy players: probable Big Ten Player-of-the-Year Johnny Davis and 9th-year senior Brad Davison. OK, Davison is only in his 5th season, it just seems like 9. He's regarded as the dirtiest player in the Big Ten, and I'm sure he'll "accidentally" trip a couple Michigan players. He's sneaky good at it. Wisconsin has some height: two 6'9" forwards and a 7-footer at center. This will be another very challenging game. Wisconsin is very good at home, and Michigan has a dismal record in the Kohl Center.

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

Go Blue!