

Nothing But 'Net – Week #19 – 03/07/2022 – Two Out Of Three Is Pretty Good

The University of Michigan men's basketball team played three games this past week, and they won two and lost one. [On Tuesday \(03/01/2022\), they beat \(#25\) Michigan State 87-70](#) in Crisler Arena, [on Thursday \(03/03/2022\), they lost to \(#24\) Iowa 82-71](#) in Crisler Arena, then [on Sunday \(03/06/2022\), they beat \(#23\) Ohio State 75-69](#) in Columbus. These were the last three games of the regular season. The two wins and one loss leave Michigan with a final regular season record of 17-13 (11-9 in Big Ten), tied for 7th place in the standings.

What Happened?

Before we look at this week's games, a quick note on an omission: In the last two articles I've talked about [Coach Howard](#) and his 5-game suspension for his role in the handshake debacle after the Wisconsin game, but I failed to mention that the Associate Head Coach, [Phil Martelli](#), has been the acting head coach for those five games. He has done a wonderful job filling in for Coach Howard, going 3-2. Now that the regular season is over, Coach Howard will be back as head coach. Back to the game descriptions.

Take a look at those dates in the first section: Tuesday 03/01, Thursday 03/03, and Sunday 03/06. Add in the previous game, a home loss to (#15) Illinois on Sunday 02/27. That's four games in eight days, including a stretch of three games in five days. That stretch was exhausting just to watch (and usher), so you can imagine how tiring it was for the players. The Michigan players looked like they were running on fumes in the Iowa game, which was their third game in five days. Winning two of the last three was quite an accomplishment, especially against three straight ranked opponents, including one of the road, in Columbus, on their Senior Day.

The MSU win was a thing of beauty. Except for maybe the home win over (#4) Purdue in mid-February, it was the best game Michigan played all season. The game was close early, until Michigan went ahead for good (12-11) at the 16:33 mark. They pushed the lead up into double digits, and led by 16 points (44-28) at halftime. They grew the lead even further in the 2nd half, up to 21 points (62-41) with 12:51 to go. Michigan stalled, and MSU crept to within 12 points (67-55) at the 8:00 mark. Michigan pushed the lead back to 14-16 points, but MSU hung around, and it was back to 12 points (75-63) with 4:34 to go. Michigan finished strong, and won by 17 points. It was a solid, dominating win.

The Iowa game was miserable. Iowa hit their first three 3-pointers, all in the first 4 minutes, and Michigan missed their first six shots, and Iowa was up 11-4 at the first media timeout (15:33 mark). The pattern continued: Iowa was hot and Michigan was not, and the Iowa lead grew to 15 points (26-11) with 10:07 left in the half. It got as high as 18 points, and was 17 points (47-30) at halftime. Michigan tried to creep back into the game early in the 2nd half, and got within 13 points (49-36) at the 18:12 mark, but Iowa answered the small Michigan run, and kept the lead in the 16-18 range. Michigan finally got the deficit down to single digits (71-62) with 5:34 left, and then down to 7 points (73-66) with 3:00 to go, but that was as close as they got. Iowa led wire-to-wire, and won by 11. Michigan looked tired and flat out there. It was a lousy Senior Night.

The OSU game was a miracle. Michigan has had a tough time recently in Columbus, and it was Ohio State's Senior Day. To make things even worse, Michigan had to play without their star player, [Hunter Dickinson](#), who was a last-minute scratch with food poisoning. It looked hopeless, but Michigan managed to hang around with OSU for much of the 1st half. The lead went back and forth, and OSU was only up by one point (29-28) with 3:16 left in the half. Unfortunately, OSU went on an 8-2 run to end the half, up 7 points (37-30). The 2nd half is when the miracle happened. Michigan tied the game (39-39) at the 15:50 mark, and the lead went back and forth a couple times, then Michigan went ahead for good (45-43) with 14:18 to go. They pushed their lead as high as 12 points (56-44 with 10:18 left), and still led by 11 points (60-49) with 7:31 to go. OSU came storming back, and got within 4 points several times, but never any closer. Michigan played tough in the last 2 minutes, made their free throws, and won by 6 points. It was an amazing, unlikely victory.

Stats

[The stats for the MSU game](#) are great. Michigan shot very well overall (32-for-55 = 58.2%), they shot 3-pointers very well (7-for-12 = 58.3%), and they shot free throws well enough (16-for-22 = 72.7%). They won the rebounding battle (33-28), but lost the turnover battle (11-10). They won this game with great shooting, both overall and from 3-point range.

[The stats for the Iowa game](#) are deceptive. Michigan shot well overall (30-for-60 = 50.0%), they shot 3-pointers pretty well (7-for-19 = 36.8%), but they didn't shoot free throws very well (4-for-8 = 50.0%). They won the rebounding battle (31-29), but lost the turnover battle (13-9). They lost this game with porous 3-point defense, allowing Iowa to shoot 57.9% (11-for-19) from deep.

[The stats for the OSU game](#) are also deceptive. Michigan shot poorly overall (28-for-68 = 41.2%), they shot 3-pointers decently (8-for-21 = 38.1%), and they shot free throws perfectly (11-for-11 = 100.0%). They won the rebounding battle (35-34) and the turnover battle (6-13). They won this game with free throw shooting and low turnovers, which is definitely not Michigan's brand this season.

Who Started?

The starters for the MSU and Iowa games were [Eli Brooks](#), [Moussa Diabate](#), [Hunter Dickinson](#), [Caleb Houston](#), and [DeVante' Jones](#). [Brandon Johns, Jr.](#) started in place of Dickinson (illness) in the OSU game.

Who Looked Good?

Dickinson only played in two of the three games this week, but he was the star in both of the games he played in, especially the MSU game. He dominated MSU, with a career-high 33 points. He also had 9 rebounds, just one short of a double-double. He played with fire in his eyes against MSU, and even got a talking to for staring and jawing at the MSU bench after some of his bigger baskets. He shot 13-for-19, including 4 dunks, and he had 4 blocked shots. He was AWESOME! Oh yeah, he had a double-double (21 points, 11 rebounds) in the Iowa game, but he didn't play with the same enthusiasm he had in the MSU game. He missed the OSU game with food poisoning.

Jones had a great week, with double figures in two of the three games: 9 points vs. MSU, 10 points vs. Iowa, and a team-high 21 points vs. OSU. He almost had a double-double vs. OSU, with 9 assists.

Brooks had a good week, with double figures in two of the three games: 8 points vs. MSU, 17 points vs. Iowa, and 14 vs. OSU.

Houston had a feast-or-famine week, with double figures in two of the three games and zero points in the third. He had 16 points vs. MSU and 11 vs. Iowa, but he was scoreless vs. OSU, shooting 0-for-10.

Diabate had a decent week, with 6, 4, and 14 points. He had to play center in the OSU game, with Dickinson out, and he did a nice job, with 7 rebounds.

[Terrance Williams II](#) had a very good week, with 9, 4, and 17 points. His 9 points vs. MSU may not look like much, but they were all key points that gave Michigan the momentum. He came in and hit his first three 3-point attempts, which swung the game Michigan's way. He also hit his first three 3-point attempts in the OSU game, once again turning the momentum in Michigan's favor. He fired up the rest of the team in both games, and he deserves a lot of the credit in both wins.

[Kobe Bufkin](#) didn't score many points this week (0, 0, and 3), but he gets a mention because his 3-pointer in the closing moments of the OSU game was the dagger that sealed the win.

[Frankie Collins](#) also didn't score many points this week (0, 0, and 4), but he gets a mention because he did a nice job spelling Jones at point guard.

Who Looked Not-So-Good?

Johns had a quiet week, with 5, 4, and 2 points.

Who Else Played?

[Jaron Faulds](#) played in the MSU and OSU games. He hit one free throw vs. MSU.

[Jace Howard](#) played in the MSU and Iowa games, but didn't score.

[Adrien Nuñez](#) played in the MSU game, but didn't score.

Who Didn't Play?

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

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

What Does It Mean?

With two wins against ranked opponents, Michigan is now on the right side of the "bubble" for the NCAA Tournament. It would certainly help if they could win a couple games in the Big Ten Tournament. They have proven that they can hang with the big boys, but they have also shown that they can lose to anyone.

What's Next?

This week Michigan is scheduled to play in the [Big Ten Tournament](#), in Indianapolis, IN. They tied for 7th place in the Big Ten standings with Michigan State, but MSU has a better winning percentage against the top teams in the conference, so MSU will be the #7 seed and Michigan will be the #8 seed. Michigan starts the tournament on Thursday (03/10/2022, 11:30 a.m. EST, BTN) vs. the #9 seed, Indiana.

[Indiana](#) is currently 18-12 (9-11 in Big Ten). They finished in 9th place in the Big Ten standings. [Michigan played Indiana once this season, back on 01/23/2022 in Bloomington, and UM won 80-62.](#) IU has had a rough end to their regular season, losing 7 of their last 9 games. This is a winnable game, if Michigan plays their "A" game.

If Michigan gets by Indiana, the next game will be against the #1 seed, Illinois, at 11:30 a.m. on Friday (03/11/2022) on BTN. Since Illinois beat Michigan twice in the regular season, it will be a stiff challenge.

[Here's the complete bracket.](#)

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

Go Blue!