

Nothing But 'Net – Week #04 – 11/21/2022 – Recalibrating...

The (#20) University of Michigan men's basketball team played three games this past week, and they won two and lost one. [On Wednesday \(11/16/2022\), they beat Pittsburgh 91-60](#) in the [Legends Classic](#) in Brooklyn, NY, [on Thursday \(11/17/2022\), they lost to Arizona State 87-62](#) in the Legends Classic, then [on Sunday \(11/20/2022\), they beat Ohio 70-66 \(overtime\)](#) in Crisler Arena. The two wins and one loss leave Michigan with a record of 4-1.

What Happened?

As good as Michigan looked in the Pittsburgh game, they looked that bad in the ASU and Ohio games. Arizona State played a nearly flawless game, and could have beaten any team in the nation that night. Michigan played their worst game in several seasons vs. ASU, and could have lost to any team in the nation that night. That's not a good combination. They followed it up with another lousy game vs. Ohio, but they managed to escape that one with a win.

It sure looks like it's time to recalibrate my expectations for this team. A few of the "should win" games now look like "toss up" games, and a few of the "toss up" games look like "should lose" games. Here are my old and new lists of expectations:

Old Expectations

- Should Win (15) – Purdue-Fort Wayne, Eastern Michigan, Ohio, Jackson State, Lipscomb, Central Michigan, Nebraska, Rutgers, Minnesota (twice), Maryland (home), Penn State (twice), Northwestern (twice).
- Should Lose (6) – Kentucky, North Carolina, Michigan State (away), Wisconsin (away), Illinois (away), Indiana (away).
- Toss Up (10) – Pittsburgh, Arizona State/VCU, Virginia, Iowa, Maryland (away), Purdue, Ohio State, Indiana (home), Michigan State (home), Wisconsin (home).

If UM can win all 15 of the "Should Win" games, and half (5) of the 10 "Toss Up" games, that would give them a record of 20-11 (12-8 in the Big Ten). That should be good enough to get them into the NCAA Tournament with a decent seed. They'll need to win more like 7 of the 10 "Toss Up" games and 2 of the "Should Lose" games to contend for the Big Ten title.

New Expectations

- Should Win (13) – Purdue-Fort Wayne, Eastern Michigan, Ohio, Jackson State, Lipscomb, Central Michigan, Nebraska, Rutgers, Minnesota (home), Penn State (twice), Northwestern (twice).
- Should Lose (10) – Virginia, Kentucky, North Carolina, Michigan State (both), Wisconsin (away), Illinois (away), Indiana (both), Maryland (away).
- Toss Up (8) – Pittsburgh, Arizona State/VCU, Iowa, Minnesota (away), Maryland (home), Purdue, Ohio State, Wisconsin (home).

If UM can win all 13 of the "Should Win" games, and half (4) of the 8 "Toss Up" games, that would give them a record of 17-14 (10-10 in the Big Ten). That sounds like an NIT record.

Game Flow

The Pittsburgh game didn't start out looking very promising. Pitt jumped out to an 8-2 lead in the first 2:28, and held the lead until the 11:17 mark, when UM went ahead 18-17. Pitt went back on top 19-18, then Michigan went ahead for good 20-19 with 10:33 to go in the half. They pushed the lead as high at 10 points (38-28) at the 3:19 mark, and led by 6 (38-32) at halftime. Michigan was hot in the second half, and they quickly pushed the lead up to 11 points (50-39) at the 17:20 mark. The lead just kept growing, through the 20s and into the 30s, topping out at 32 points. Coach Howard emptied the bench, and Michigan won by 31 points. It was a fun, exciting win against a solid ACC team.

The ASU game also started out looking not-very-promising, but unlike the Pitt game, Michigan never got going. ASU led by 10 (15-5) at the 15:04 mark, then 15 (25-10) at the 11:16 mark. When the lead got up to 23 points (44-21) with 1:22 to go in the half, the situation was pretty grim. ASU led by 18 points (46-28) at halftime, and UM managed to get within 15 points (52-37) at the 15:33 mark of the 2nd half, but that was as close as they got. ASU pushed their lead up into the 20s and 30s before they emptied their bench, coasting to a 25-point win. It was an ugly loss for Michigan.

The Ohio game was another slow start for Michigan. After leading 2-0 and 5-4, Michigan let Ohio go on a quick 9-1 run to lead 13-6 with 14:01 to go. In those first 6 minutes, UM missed four 3-pointers, missed two 2-point attempts, and turned the ball over twice. It was an ugly slow start. Ohio led for almost all of the rest of the 1st half, until Michigan tied it up 30-30 with 22 seconds to go, and went ahead 33-31 with a 3-pointer at the buzzer. Michigan held the lead for the first 7:12 of the 2nd half, leading by 6 points (43-37) at the 14:28 mark. Michigan let Ohio go on another run, this time 18-5, to go up by 7 points (55-48) at the 8:29 mark. Ohio led for most of the rest of the game, until Michigan tied it up 61-61 with 1:09 left. Michigan hit 2 free throws with 2.1 seconds left to go up 63-61, and should have won the game in regulation, but they let Ohio score at the buzzer to send the game to overtime, 63-63. Michigan finally looked like the better team in overtime, leading the whole way, winning by 4 (70-66). It was exciting, but Michigan shouldn't be playing exciting games against MAC teams.

Stats

[The game stats for the Pitt game](#) were very nice. Michigan shot very well overall (35-for-60 = 58.3%), they shot 3-pointers well (9-for-20 = 45.0%), and they shot free throws well enough (12-for-18 = 66.7%). They won the rebounding battle (36-30) and the turnover battle (6-13). They won this game with good shooting and solid rebounding.

[The game stats for the ASU game](#) were miserable. Michigan shot very poorly overall (21-for-62 = 33.9%), they shot 3-pointers terribly (4-for-22 = 18.2%), and they shot free throws acceptably (16-for-24 = 66.7%). They lost the rebounding battle (35-31), but won the turnover battle (8-12). They lost this game with terrible shooting, combined with "lights out" shooting by ASU: 32-for-53 (60.4%) overall, 11-for-19 (57.9%) from deep.

[The game stats for the Ohio game](#) were dreary. Michigan shot poorly overall (24-for-63 = 38.1%), they shot 3-pointers decently (10-for-32 = 31.3%), and they shot free throws poorly (12-for-20 = 60.0%). They lost the rebounding battle (49-46) and the turnover battle (11-8). They (barely) won this game by playing well in overtime.

Who Started?

The starters for all three games were [Kobe Bufkin](#), [Hunter Dickinson](#), [Jett Howard](#), [Jaelin Llewellyn](#), and [Terrance Williams II](#).

Who Looked Good?

Dickinson hit double figures in all 3 games, with 11, 14, and 24 points. He also had 14 rebounds vs. Ohio, for a nice double-double. He carried the team in the Ohio game, and played the last 4:22 of regulation and all of the overtime period with 4 fouls. He also (finally) hit a 3-pointer (2 of them, actually) in the Ohio game after missing his first three 3-point attempts this season. Even better, one of those 3-pointers was the one that finally put UM ahead at the halftime buzzer.

Jett Howard also hit double figures in all 3 games, with 17, 12, and 13 points. His 3-point shooting is vital to this team, and he did pretty well this week, shooting 2-for-3, 2-for-7, and 3-for-7, for a total of 7-for-17.

Bufkin hit double figures in one game (14 vs. Pitt), and he came close in the Ohio game, with 9. He had a lousy game vs. ASU, with 5 points on 1-for-9 shooting.

Llewellyn also hit double figures in one game (10 vs. Ohio), came close in another (8 vs. Pitt), and had a lousy game vs. ASU (5 points on 2-for-6 shooting). He finally hit a 3-pointer (2 of them, actually) in the Ohio game after missing his first 11 3-point attempts of the season.

Williams had mediocre week, with 7, 4, and 9 points. He hit a couple timely 3-pointers in the Ohio game. He also had 8 rebounds in that game, including 3 offensive boards.

[Joey Baker](#) was the only other Michigan player to hit double figures in at least one game, with 14 points vs. Pitt, on 5-for-6 shooting (4-for-5 from deep). He was less successful in the other 2 games, with 2 and 0 points.

[Dug McDaniel](#) is getting better with each game. He didn't hit double figures in any of the games, but he's scoring more, getting more assists, and turning the ball over less. He had 8, 7, and 2 points, and he had 8 assists vs. Pitt.

Who Looked Not-So-Good?

No one looked not-so-good. Everyone had some bad moments, especially in the ASU game, but everyone had some good moments as well.

Who Else Played?

[Isaiah Barnes](#) scored 3, 0, and 0 points.

[Gregg Glenn III](#) played for 4 minutes in the ASU game, and scored 2 points.

[Jace Howard](#) scored 3 points (1-for-1 shooting 3-pointers) vs. Pitt, 1 point vs. ASU, and didn't play in the Ohio game.

[Youssef Khayat](#) finally got to play this week, which means that he's not being redshirted. He played in the Pitt game (0 points) and the ASU game (3 points, on 1-for-1 shooting from 3-point range). He didn't play in the Ohio game.

[Tarris Reed, Jr.](#) scored 4, 5, and 0 points backing up Dickinson.

[Will Tschetter](#) scored 2, 2, and 3 points. He played for 8 minutes in the Ohio game when the game was in doubt (which was the whole game). He played ferocious defense.

Who Didn't Play?

[Ian Burns](#), [Jackson Selvala](#), and [Cooper Smith](#) didn't play in any of the games this week.

What Does It Mean?

Well, Michigan proved they aren't unbeatable. They proved it in a big way. They also proved that they can steamroll a Power-5 opponent. Now they know what they need to work on (3-point shooting, free throws, turnovers, and perimeter defense). This one loss and one close game against an overmatched opponent don't ruin the season, but they sure were disheartening. Michigan needs to put those games behind them and move on to better times. They have the talent to play much better, they just don't have the chemistry yet.

What's Next?

This week, Michigan only plays one game. On Wednesday (11/23/2022, 8:30 p.m., BTN) they play Jackson State in Crisler Arena.

[Jackson State](#) was 11-19 (9-9 in the SWAC) last season, and they're 0-3 so far this season. Last season, they didn't have any noteworthy wins or losses, and they lost in the 1st round of their conference tournament and didn't play in a post-season tournament. They don't have any noteworthy players, and they only have one tall guy, a 6'11" center. This is the kind of game that Michigan should win easily, and should use to get some things figured out.

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

Go Blue!