

Nothing But 'Net – Week #05 – 11/28/2022 – Still A Mystery

How about that UM football team? Go Blue!

The University of Michigan men's basketball team played one game this past week, and they won it. [On Wednesday \(11/23/2022\), they beat Jackson State 78-68](#) in Crisler Arena. The win raises Michigan's record to 5-1.

What Happened?

Is Michigan any good this season? It's still a mystery. On the one hand, they looked good against Purdue-Fort Wayne and Pittsburgh, but on the other hand, they looked terrible against Arizona State, and mediocre against Eastern Michigan, Ohio, and Jackson State. Other than the Arizona State game, Michigan has had stretches of good and lousy play in every game. They appear to have enough talent to beat good teams, but they sure haven't developed much chemistry yet.

Game Flow

The JSU game was yet another slow start for Michigan. JSU led for much of the 1st half, but only by 2-4 points. Michigan would occasionally take a 2-4 point lead, then JSU would take the lead back. It was all tied up (22-22) with 6:08 left in the half, when Michigan finally went ahead for good. They finished the half on a 15-5 run, and led 37-27 at halftime. In the 2nd half, Michigan slowly began to pull away, pushing their lead up to 19 points (60-41) at the 9:59 mark. It was still 17 points (72-55) with only 2:21 to go, when Michigan fell asleep and JSU caught fire. They got as close as 6 points (74-68) with 22 seconds left, but UM made their free throws and escaped with the 10-point win. It shouldn't have been that close.

Stats

[The game stats](#) were OK, but not great. Michigan shot poorly overall (25-for-59 = 42.4%), they shot 3-pointers pretty well (12-for-30 = 40.0%), and they shot free throws very well (16-for-19 = 84.2%). They lost the rebounding battle (44-38), and tied the turnover battle (11-11). The most interesting stat is one I don't usually mention, but this was significant: Michigan blocked 13 shots, including 4 by [Hunter Dickinson](#), and 3 each by [Kobe Bufkin](#) and [Jett Howard](#). Michigan won this game because of those blocked shots, along with great free throw shooting and good 3-point shooting.

Who Started?

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

Who Looked Good?

Jett Howard was the leading scorer for Michigan, with 19 points. He shot pretty well: 6-for-10 overall, 4-7 from 3-point range.

Williams hit double figures, with 11 points. He didn't shoot as well as Howard: 4-for-11 overall, 1-for-3 from deep.

Bufkin was the only other Michigan player in double figures, with 10 points, on decent shooting: 3-for-7 overall, 2-for-5 from deep.

Dickinson didn't quite hit double figures (9 points), but he did have 12 rebounds.

Llewellyn also just missed double figures (9 points), but he hit several important free throws in the last 2 minutes. In fact, his points came from one 3-pointer (on 5 attempts, yuck) and 6 free throws (on 6 attempts, yay).

[Dug McDaniel](#) had his best game yet, with 9 points on 4-for-8 shooting (1-for-3 from 3-point range).

[Joey Baker](#) came out firing, and hit a couple 3-pointers in a row, then missed everything else. He ended up with 6 points on 2-for-8 shooting (2-for-5 from deep).

Who Looked Not-So-Good?

No one looked not-so-good.

Who Else Played?

[Jace Howard](#) scored 3 points on 1-for-1 shooting, a 3-pointer.

[Youssef Khayat](#) played for 5 minutes and didn't record a single statistic.

[Tarris Reed, Jr.](#) scored 2 points backing up Dickinson.

Who Didn't Play?

[Isaiah Barnes](#), [Gregg Glenn III](#), and [Will Tschetter](#) were the scholarship players who didn't play.

[Ian Burns](#), [Jackson Selvala](#), and [Cooper Smith](#) were the practice squad players who didn't play.

What Does It Mean?

This was a game that Michigan should have won easily, but didn't. After a shaky 1st half, with 10:00 minutes to go in the 2nd half they led by 19 points and were cruising. They should have pulled away and emptied the bench, but instead they were in a dogfight. Is Michigan as good as they looked in building the 19-point lead, or are they as bad as they looked giving it up?

At this point, UM is looking a lot like an NIT team, not an NCAA team.

What's Next?

This week, Michigan plays two games, and they're both big ones. On Tuesday (11/29/2022, 9:30 p.m., ESPN) they play (#5) Virginia in Crisler Arena, then on Sunday (12/04/2022, 1:00 p.m. EST, ABC) they play (#15) Kentucky in London, England. The game against UVa is part of the [ACC/Big Ten Challenge](#).

[Virginia](#) is 5-0 this season, with impressive wins over (#5) Baylor and (#19) Illinois. They don't have any noteworthy players, but they do have decent height: a 6'11" player and a 7'1" player. This will be Michigan's toughest test to date. They need to control the pace, and not let UVa run away with it like Arizona State did earlier this month.

[Kentucky](#) is 4-2 this season, with no impressive wins, and losses to Michigan State (in double overtime) and (#2) Gonzaga. They have a couple noteworthy players (CJ Fredrick and Oscar Tshiebwe), but they don't have much height, just one 6'11" guy. Kentucky started the season ranked #4, but the two losses have dropped them down a bit. Still, this is another stiff test for Michigan. Once again, they need to stay close to Kentucky and hope for good things in the final minutes. They can't let them run away with the game.

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

Go Blue!