

Nothing But 'Net – Week #11 – 01/09/2023 – You Win Some, You Lose Some

The University of Michigan men's basketball team played two games this past week, and they won one and lost the other. [On Wednesday \(01/04/2023\), they beat Penn State 79-69](#) in Crisler Arena, then [on Saturday \(01/07/2023\), they lost at Michigan State 59-53](#). The win and the loss leave Michigan with a record of 9-6 (3-1 in Big Ten).

What Happened?

Michigan played a pretty good game against a pretty good PSU team, but they played a pretty poor game against MSU. If they had played in the MSU game the way they played in the PSU game, they probably would have won. It's tough to win on the road, especially in the Big Ten, and it's even harder in a rivalry game. That's why it's such a shame that Michigan didn't take advantage of a mediocre game by MSU.

Game Flow

The PSU game was a game of runs. It was a seesaw affair for the first 4 minutes, with PSU getting their last lead, 8-7, at the 15:49 mark. At that point, Michigan went on a 13-2 run to go up 20-10 with 12:17 to go in the half. Note the difference there: 11 points. That number will show up a lot in the rest of the game flow. Michigan kept the lead in the 8-10 point range for the rest of the half, pushing it up to 11 points a few times (there's that number again). It looked like UM was going to lead by 11 points at halftime, but PSU hit a half-court buzzer-beater to cut it to 8 points, 42-34. Early in the 2nd half, Michigan pushed the lead back up to 11 points a couple times, the most significant of which was 47-36 at the 18:51 mark. Over the next 4 minutes, PSU went on a grinding 11-0 run to tie the game up (47-47) with 15:06 left. It was very frustrating, watching all the "dry" Michigan possessions in a row. UM finally woke up, and pushed the lead back up to 11 points (58-47) with 12:57 to go. In fact, they got the lead as high as 14 points (61-47) at the 11:20 mark. They still led by 14 points (68-54) with 8:25 to go, when PSU went on another 11-0 run, to cut the lead to 3 points (68-65) at the 4:28 mark. The Michigan lead was still only 3 points (72-69) with 2:17 left, when Michigan closed out the game with a 7-0 run to win by 10. It was a good, solid win against a good, solid Big Ten team.

The MSU game was very frustrating. The game was right there for Michigan to win. MSU didn't play very well, but Michigan played even worse. MSU's defense didn't stop Michigan, Michigan stopped themselves. The first 15 minutes (yes, 15 minutes) were ragged and choppy. Neither team was shooting well, and the score was tied 14-14 with 5:08 left in the half. You read that right: each team had 14 points in 15 minutes. Lots of missed shots and turnovers. It was ugly. Unfortunately, MSU finally got on track offensively in the last 5 minutes of the half, and finished the half on a 13-4 run to lead 27-18. MSU kept it going in the 2nd half, and kept the lead in the 10-12 point range. It was still 10 points (47-37) with 6:02 to go when Michigan made their push to get back in the game. They got as close at 4 points (47-43) at the 3:55 mark, but MSU kept the lead in the 5-7 point range for the rest of the game. UM did get back within 4 points (57-53) with 13 seconds to go, but that was as close as they could get. MSU hit a pair of meaningless free throws with 0:00 left to make it a 6-point game.

Stats

[The game stats for the PSU game](#) were decent. Michigan shot pretty well overall (27-for-58 = 46.6%), they shot 3-pointers well (8-for-19 = 42.1%), and they shot free throws decently (17-for-25 = 68.0%). They won the rebounding battle (37-35) and the turnover battle (3-8). They won this game with good shooting and very low turnovers.

[The game stats for the MSU game](#) were miserable. Michigan shot very poorly overall (19-for-55 = 34.5%), they shot 3-pointers terribly (3-for-20 = 15.0%), and they shot free throws well (12-for-16 = 75.0%). They lost the rebounding battle (38-34), but won the turnover battle (10-12). They lost this game with absolutely terrible 3-point shooting. 3-for-20 is ridiculous,

especially since most of the shots were wide open and not contested. If Michigan had hit anywhere near their season average from 3-point range, they would have won easily.

Who Started?

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

Who Looked Good?

Dickinson was the high scorer for Michigan in both games, with 17 and 18 points. He shot pretty well (6-for-10 and 8-for-16), he grabbed 6 and 7 rebounds, and he even hit another 3-pointer.

Bufkin also hit double figures in both games, with 14 and 15 points. He didn't shoot particularly well: 5-for-12 overall (1-for-4 from deep) vs. PSU, and 4-for-11 (0-for-3 from deep) vs. MSU.

Jett Howard was the third player to hit double figures in both games, with 14 and 10 points. He was one of the main problems with 3-point shooting vs. MSU. He was open, and he kept firing away, but he only made 2 shots on 6 attempts. Michigan needed him to be hot.

McDaniel had one good game (12 points vs. PSU), and one horrible game (0 points vs. MSU). He's another player who could have won the MSU game with a decent game, but he was 0-for-4 shooting.

Williams had a decent game vs. PSU (8 points), but a lousy game vs. MSU (3 points). He was the leading rebounder in the PSU game (9 rebounds), and he got 4 more vs. MSU, but he was worthless offensively in the MSU game.

[Tarris Reed, Jr.](#) is getting better and better backing up Dickinson, scoring 5 points in each game. He is playing with more confidence each game.

[Joey Baker](#) had one good game (9 points vs. PSU), and one miserable game (0 points vs. MSU). He was another key offender in the "bad 3-point shooting vs. MSU" category, going 0-for-3, all good looks.

Who Looked Not-So-Good?

No one looked "not-so-good" this week, although several players had weak games in one of the two games.

Who Else Played?

[Isaiah Barnes](#) played in both games, but failed to score.

[Jace Howard](#) played in both games, but failed to score.

[Will Tschetter](#) played in the MSU game, and scored 2 points.

Who Didn't Play?

[Gregg Glenn III](#) and [Youssef Khayat](#) were the scholarship players who didn't get to play this week.

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

What Does It Mean?

After getting closer to being a "bubble team" for the Big Dance by beating Maryland last week, Michigan just held even this week. They were expected to beat PSU and lose to MSU, and that's what they did. The win over PSU will help their chances a little, and the loss to MSU will hurt their chances a little, so it's a "push".

They still look a lot like an NIT team, not an NCAA Tournament team.

What's Next?

This week, Michigan plays two games. On Thursday (01/12/2023, 7:00 p.m. EST, ESPN2), they play at Iowa, then on Sunday (01/15/2023, TBA, BTN), they play Northwestern in Crisler Arena.

[Iowa](#) is currently 10-6 (2-3 in Big Ten), with impressive wins over Seton Hall, Clemson, Georgia Tech, Iowa State, (#15) Indiana, and Rutgers, and unimpressive losses to TCU, Eastern Illinois, Nebraska, and Penn State. They have one noteworthy player (Kris Murray) and some height (a 6'10" guy and a 6'11" guy). This is another team that Michigan needs to be able to beat if they want to go to the NCAA Tournament. Michigan has always had a tough time in Carver-Hawkeye Arena, so this will be a challenging game. Michigan can win if they play like they did vs. Maryland and PSU, but not if they play like they did vs. MSU.

[Northwestern](#) is currently 12-3 (3-1 in Big Ten), with impressive wins over (#20) Michigan State, Illinois, and (#15) Indiana, and unimpressive losses to Pittsburgh and Ohio State. They have a couple noteworthy players (Boo Buie and Chase Audige), and some height (a 6'10" guy and a 7-footer). Northwestern is MUCH better than predicted for this season, with three impressive wins in the Big Ten. This game looked like a pretty sure win when the preseason predictions came out, but now it looks quite challenging. Michigan needs to play their "A" game to win this one.

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

Go Blue!