

Nothing But 'Net – Week #17 – 02/20/2023 – Both Sides Of The Endgame

The University of Michigan men's basketball team played two games this past week, and they lost one and won the other. [On Tuesday \(02/14/2023\), they lost at Wisconsin 64-59](#), then [on Saturday \(02/18/2023\), they beat Michigan State 84-72](#) in Crisler Arena. The loss and the win leave Michigan with a record of 15-12 (9-7 in Big Ten).

What Happened?

Another week, another split, predictably with the loss being on the road and the win at home. As has happened so often this season, both games came down to the final minutes: the endgame. In the Wisconsin game, Michigan couldn't get a basket when they needed it, but they were magnificent in the endgame vs. MSU. In fact, the last 2 minutes of the MSU game were the best 2 minutes Michigan has played so far this season.

As an aside, I'm full of sorrow about the shooting incident at Michigan State this past week, and I'm impressed with the way the UM community showed their support to MSU, but I'm still glad Michigan beat Michigan State on the basketball court.

Game Flow

The Wisconsin game was close early, with the teams exchanging the lead a few times in the first 11 minutes. With 8:38 to go, Michigan had a one-point lead (20-19), when Wisconsin went on an 8-0 run to go up by 7 (27-20). Michigan fought back, and made a 3-pointer with 5 seconds left in the half to lead by one point at halftime, 32-31. That lead lasted for all of 2 minutes in the 2nd half. Wisconsin went ahead 35-34 at the 18:13 mark, and pushed the lead as high as 12 points (54-42) with 10:27 to go. Michigan went on a nice 12-1 run to get within a point (55-54) at the 4:10 mark, and they were only down 2 points (59-57) with 24 seconds to go, but they couldn't get the stops or the baskets they needed to win. Michigan held Wisconsin without a made field goal (on 15 attempts) for the last 10:45 of the game, but the Badgers made 12 free throws (on 14 attempts) down the stretch to win the game. The game was there for Michigan to win, but they couldn't make the clutch shots.

The MSU game was also close early, with the teams exchanging the lead a few times in the first 8 minutes. With 11:38 to go, Michigan had a one-point lead (18-17), when MSU went ahead for the rest of the half. They pushed the lead as high as 8 points (33-25 at the 3:59 mark), and led by 3 at halftime, 36-33. The 2nd half was more of the same: MSU led by 3-5 points for the first 6 minutes, until Michigan managed to tie it up (46-46) with 14:11 to go. This was a key moment: as he made the basket to tie the game, [Jett Howard](#) landed wrong and re-injured his ankle. He left the game, and didn't return. His status is unknown at this point. So, even though the game was tied, Michigan had to play the last 14+ minutes without their best shooter. Yikes! For the next 9 minutes, the same pattern kept playing out: MSU would get ahead by 1-3 points, and Michigan would tie it up. The game was tied at 46-46, 50-50, 52-52, 54-54, 63-63, and 65-65. In between those ties, MSU actually got ahead by 6 points at one point: 63-57, with 8:23 to go. So, there we were, tied at 65-65 with 5:43 to go. Now it was Michigan's turn to have a slim lead in between ties. UM went up 67-65, then MSU tied it up 67-67. UM went up 69-67, MSU tied it up 69-69. UM went up 72-69, MSU tied it up 72-72. Fortunately, those were the last points MSU scored. They went the last 2:29 without a point, missing 4 shots. Michigan scored the last 12 points, to win by 12. It was awesome!

Stats

[The game stats for the Wisconsin game](#) were weak. Michigan shot pretty poorly overall (24-for-57 = 42.1%), they shot 3-pointers decently (5-for-16 = 31.3%), and they shot free throws poorly (6-for-10 = 60.0%). They lost the rebounding battle (38-37) and the turnover battle (12-5). They lost this game with poor shooting, turnovers, and rebounding. Even though they were only out-rebounded by one, they gave up 15 offensive rebounds to Wisconsin.

[The game stats for the MSU game](#) were pretty good. Michigan shot pretty well overall (29-for-59 = 49.2%), they shot 3-pointers pretty well (9-for-26 = 34.6%), and they shot free throws well (17-for-21 = 81.0%). They crushed MSU on the boards (38-25), but lost the turnover battle (9-8). They won this game with rebounding. Michigan had 14 offensive rebounds.

Who Started?

The starters for both games were [Kobe Bufkin](#), [Hunter Dickinson](#), [Jett Howard](#), [Dug McDaniel](#), and [Will Tschetter](#). Tschetter started in place of [Terrance Williams II](#), who is out with a bruised knee. I couldn't find an estimate for when Williams will be available again.

Who Looked Good?

Bufkin was the star this week, with a team-high 21 vs. Wisconsin and 17 vs. MSU. His 3-pointer with 1:54 left in the MSU game broke the 72-72 tie, and started the 12-0 Michigan run. It was an off-balance desperation shot that just beat the shot-clock buzzer, and it was the biggest basket of the game. Bufkin was very efficient this week: 9-for-15 overall (3-for-4 from deep) vs. Wisconsin, and 6-for-9 overall (3-for-5 from deep) vs. MSU.

Dickinson had a good week, with 12 and 14 points. He also had 12 rebounds in the Wisconsin game, for another double-double. He hit a 3-pointer in each game, and his 3-pointer vs. MSU was probably the dagger. It came right after Bufkin had made his big 3-pointer, to push the UM lead up to 6 points.

McDaniel had one great game (18 points vs. MSU) and one decent game (7 points vs. Wisconsin). He was the high scorer for Michigan in the MSU game, and 18 points is a new career high for him. He was very impressive in that game, outplaying the MSU point guards.

Jett Howard had a decent week, with 9 and 10 points, but he had a rough time with his shooting: he was 4-for-14 (1-for-6 from deep) vs. Wisconsin, and 3-for-9 (1-for-7 from deep) vs. MSU.

Tschetter had a decent week, scoring 4 and 7 points. He did hit a 3-pointer vs. MSU. He still has a tendency to play a little too fast and a little too out-of-control. Because of it, he gets called for silly fouls or commits silly turnovers. He needs to slow down and play with more control.

[Tarris Reed, Jr.](#) was another star in the MSU game. He had 8 points, which is great for him, but even more importantly, he had 10 rebounds and 3 blocked shots. 4 of his 10 rebounds were offensive, and he finished through contact a couple times. He had a decent game vs. Wisconsin, with 6 points (and 7 rebounds).

[Joey Baker](#) had one good game (10 points vs. MSU) and one lousy game (0 points vs. Wisconsin).

Who Looked Not-So-Good?

No one looked not-so-good this week, although a couple players had one good game and one mediocre game.

Who Else Played?

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

Who Didn't Play?

[Isaiah Barnes](#), [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?

I guess we're still talking about Michigan's chances for the NCAA Tournament? The win over MSU sure helped, but the loss to Wisconsin sure hurt, so it was another break-even week. With only 4 regular season games left, Michigan probably has to win at least 2 of them, along with one win in the Big Ten Tournament, to stand a chance. They still haven't beaten a ranked team, and they've only beaten one good team on the road (Northwestern). They're not on the bubble, but they still stand a chance of getting there. A slim chance, but a chance.

What's Next?

This week, Michigan plays two games. On Thursday (02/23/2023, 8:30 p.m., FS1), they play at Rutgers, then on Sunday (02/26/2023, 2:00 p.m., CBS), they play Wisconsin in Crisler Arena.

[Rutgers](#) is currently 17-10 (8-7 in Big Ten), with impressive wins over (#8) Indiana, (#1) Purdue, Michigan State, and Wisconsin, and unimpressive losses to Temple, Miami (FL), Seton Hall, and Nebraska. They don't have any noteworthy players, but they do have decent height: a 6'10" guy and a 6'11" guy. On the one hand, they've beaten several good teams, but on the other hand, they lost to Nebraska by 10 points at home last week. This is probably the best team that Rutgers has had since they joined the Big Ten, and it should be a challenging game.

[Wisconsin](#) is currently 15-11 (7-9 in Big Ten). Michigan just played them last week and barely lost to them. Since that game, they lost to Rutgers at home. This will be another very challenging game for Michigan. It's Michigan's last home game of the season, and it's Senior Day.

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

Go Blue!