

Nothing But 'Net – Week #05 – 11/27/2023 – Paradise (Island) Lost

The University of Michigan men's basketball team played three games this past week, and they won one and lost the other two. [On Wednesday \(11/22/2023\), they lost to Memphis 71-67](#), [on Thursday \(11/23/2023\), they beat Stanford 83-78](#), then [on Friday \(11/24/2023\), they lost to Texas Tech 73-57](#). All three games were in Paradise Island, Bahamas, as part of the [Battle 4 Atlantis tournament](#), where they finished in 6th place. The win and two losses leave Michigan with a record of 4-3.

What Happened?

This is a very confusing time to be a Michigan sports fan. The football team just completed a perfect 12-0 regular season, including [a tense 30-24 win over Ohio State](#), but they're under a dark cloud due to "[Signgate](#)". The men's basketball team looked great in their first three games, and has looked helpless since then. Am I happy or sad? Both, I guess.

It's hard to look at the Battle 4 Atlantis tournament as anything but a disaster. Yes, Michigan won one game, and sure, Memphis and Texas Tech looked good, but Michigan played very sloppy basketball in all three games, and they were lucky to win one of them.

Game Flow

The Memphis game started out OK, with a tie game (6-6) at the 15:16 mark, then with Memphis leading for the next 6 minutes, but never by more than 2-4 points. With 8:55 left in the 1st half, Memphis was up by one point, 20-19. That's when UM went cold and allowed Memphis to end the half on a 17-6 run, to lead by 12 points (37-25) at halftime. UM made a few runs at the lead in the 2nd half, but Memphis always answered and kept the lead around 10-12 points. With 13:17 left in the game, Memphis was up by 12 points (48-36), when UM finally started clawing their way back into the game. They got the deficit down to 3 points (51-48) at the 8:41 mark, and one point (59-58) with 4:12 to go, but they couldn't "get over the hump". Memphis built the lead back up to 9 points (67-58) with 1:07 left, UM got back within 2 points (69-67) with 10 seconds left, but they couldn't get any closer, losing by 4 points. It was discouraging, since UM played from behind for almost the whole game.

The Stanford game was hard to watch. UM led 2-0 early, and was only down one point (5-4) at the 18:07 mark. Then the wheels fell off. Michigan couldn't buy a basket, and Stanford couldn't miss, leading to a 18-5 run. With 12:40 left in the half, Stanford led by 14 points (23-9), and it looked like they were going to run away with the game. Fortunately, that's when Michigan finally woke up, going on a 21-5 run of their own, to lead by 2 points (30-28) at the 6:31 mark. The lead went back and forth for the rest of the half, with UM up by one point (45-44) at halftime. Stanford started the 2nd half strong, but UM fought back, and the game was tied up (52-52) with 16:46 left. It was Michigan's turn for a run, and they led by 13 points (67-54) with 12:24 to go. Stanford wasn't done, going on their own run to tie it up (72-72) at the 4:43 mark. Michigan led the rest of the way, by as many as 8 points, and won by 5. The Stanford runs were scary to watch. Michigan was helpless to stop them. Fortunately, they had just enough firepower to pull off a few runs of their own.

The TTU game was close for the first 5 minutes, with TTU up by 2 points (8-6) at the 15:24 mark. That was the last time it was close. TTU pulled out to a 12-14 point lead for the rest of the half, leading by 14 points (35-21) at halftime. Things only got worse in the 2nd half, as TTU expanded their lead to as much as 23 points. Michigan got within 12 points a couple times early in the 2nd half, but TTU always answered the UM runs and got the lead back up near 20, coasting to a 16-point win. Michigan looked helpless out there.

Stats

[The game stats for the Memphis game](#) were confusing. Michigan shot poorly overall (24-for-61 = 39.3%), they shot 3-pointers decently (8-for-24 = 33.3%), and they shot free throws decently (11-for-17 = 64.7%). They outrebounded Memphis by an astounding 50-28, but

they lost the turnover battle badly, 18-11. How did UM lose this game with such a huge rebounding edge? Mediocre shooting and too many turnovers.

[The game stats for the Stanford game](#) were pretty good. Michigan shot well overall (32-for-54 = 59.3%), they shot 3-pointers well (8-for-18 = 44.4%), and they shot free throws decently (11-for-16 = 68.8%). They won the rebounding battle (29-27), and tied in the turnover battle (13-13). They won this game with pretty good shooting and rebounding.

[The game stats for the TTU game](#) were miserable. Michigan shot poorly overall (22-for-54 = 40.7%), they shot 3-pointers miserably (6-for-20 = 30.0%), and they shot free throws terribly (7-for-14 = 50.0%). They were outrebounded badly (41-30), but they did win the turnover battle (8-9). They lost this game with miserable shooting and poor rebounding.

Who Started?

The starters for all three games were [Nimari Burnett](#), [Dug McDaniel](#), [Olivier Nkamhoua](#), [Tarris Reed, Jr.](#), and [Terrance Williams II](#).

Who Looked Good?

Nkamhoua was the leading scorer for Michigan in 2 of the 3 games (Memphis, with 18 points, and TTU with 16 points). He also had double figures (16 points) in the Stanford game. He shot pretty well, and he had lots of rebounds.

McDaniel was the leading scorer in the only game that Nkamhoua wasn't: Stanford, with 20 points. He had 13 vs. Memphis, and 12 vs. TTU. He didn't shoot particularly well, especially from 3-point range, but he had a nice number of assists and rebounds.

Williams had 2 good games (17 points vs. Stanford and 10 points vs. TTU) and a horrible game vs. Memphis (2 points on 0-for-5 shooting). He shot well in the Stanford game (5-for-8 overall, 4-for-5 from deep), but not quite as well vs. TTU (4-for-8 overall, 1-for-5 from deep). He even grabbed a few rebounds in each game.

Burnett also had 2 good games (16 points vs. Memphis and 10 points vs. Stanford) and one horrible game (2 points vs. TTU on 1-for-10 shooting overall, 0-for-4 from deep). He had lots of rebounds, a few assists, and not too many turnovers.

Reed also had 2 good games (8 points vs. Memphis and 11 points vs. Stanford) and one miserable game (4 points, all free throws, vs. TTU). He had 12 rebounds vs. Memphis, and a total of 8 blocked shots during the tournament.

[Tray Jackson](#) had 2 decent games (7 points vs. Memphis and 5 points vs. TTU) and one miserable game (2 points vs. Stanford). He shot fairly well, and grabbed a few rebounds.

[Will Tschetter](#) chipped in 3, 7, and 5 points, and grabbed a few rebounds.

Who Looked Not-So-Good?

[George Washington III](#) played in all 3 games, and failed to score. He took one shot each in the Memphis and TTU games, but not in the Stanford game. He is not contributing much so far.

Who Else Played?

[Youssef Khayat](#) played in the TTU game, and scored 3 points, shooting 1-for-2 from 3-point range.

Who Didn't Play?

None of the Scout Team players ([Ian Burns](#), [Harrison Hochberg](#), [Jackson Selvala](#), and [Cooper Smith](#)) played in any of the games.

[Jace Howard](#) and [Jaelin Llewellyn](#) are injured, and not playing yet. They are both expected back "later in the season".

What Does It Mean?

After a hot start (3-0), Michigan has settled down to where I expected them to be. They appear to have a decent amount of talent, but the chemistry sure isn't there. They are also very thin at center and shooting guard. Based on their performance so far, I'm thinking my prediction of 11-20 still looks pretty good. They will win less than half of their "toss up" games, lose a few of their "should win" games, and lose most of their "should lose" games, with an occasional upset to keep things interesting.

What's Next?

This week, Michigan only plays one game. On Saturday (12/02/2023, 3:30 p.m., FS1), they play at Oregon.

[Oregon](#) is currently 4-2, with a win over Georgia and a loss to Santa Clara. They don't have any noteworthy players, but they do have some height: a 6'10" player, a 6'11" player, and a 7-footer. This is a game that Michigan probably won't win, especially if they continue playing the way they've been playing for the last 4 games. If they can get their swagger back, maybe they can pull off the road upset.

Oh yeah, just so you aren't surprised when you watch the game on Saturday, here's what Oregon's court looks like:



Pretty distracting, no?

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

Go Blue!