

## **Nothing But 'Net – Week #16 – 02/12/2024 – One Step Forward...**

The University of Michigan men's basketball team played two games this past week, and they won one and lost the other. [On Wednesday \(02/07/2024\), they beat \(#11\) Wisconsin 72-68](#) in Crisler Arena, then [on Saturday \(02/10/2024\), they lost at Nebraska 79-59](#). The win and the loss leave Michigan with a record of 8-16 (3-10 in Big Ten).

### **What Happened?**

The win over Wisconsin was a huge upset, especially given how poorly Michigan has been playing for the last month. After many games in a row where Michigan has folded when things got tough in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half, UM kept their composure in the face of adversity vs. Wisconsin and finished the game strong. Could they carry that momentum into their next game, at Nebraska? No, not even close. They got behind early, fell way behind before halftime, and never seriously challenged Nebraska in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half. One step forward, one step back.

### **Game Flow**

The Wisconsin game was close early, with tie scores at 6-6, 8-8, 10-10, 11-11, 13-13, and 19-19. Michigan finally started pulling away with a 10-1 run, to go up 29-20 with 7:28 to go in the 1<sup>st</sup> half. They kept the lead in the 5-7 point range for a while, but Wisconsin snuck up, and Michigan was only leading by 1 point (34-33) with 1:58 left. Fortunately, they finished the half on a 3-0 run, to lead by 4 points (37-33) at halftime. As they have so many times this season, Michigan had a tough time at the start of the 2<sup>nd</sup> half. Wisconsin outscored Michigan 10-5 in the first 3:47, to go up 43-42. In the last month, whenever Michigan has lost their lead in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half, they have never regained it. This game was different. Instead of folding, Michigan hung in there with Wisconsin, and the lead went back and forth for several minutes. With 12:29 left in the game, Wisconsin was up by 1 point (48-47). That was their last lead. Michigan grabbed the lead at the 12:07 mark, 49-48, and never trailed again. They got the lead at high as 9 points (63-54 with 5:45 to go), but let Wisconsin get within 2 points (70-68) with 11 seconds to go. Michigan hit their free throws, and won by 4. It was Michigan's best game, and best win, of the season.

Other than the first 5 minutes, the Nebraska game was a disaster. Michigan actually led once (2-0), and the score was tied 2-2 and 4-4. Michigan was within 2 points (9-7) with 15:32 left in the 1<sup>st</sup> half, and then the roof fell in. Nebraska went on a 13-0 run, and led 22-7 with 11:20 to go. Michigan made a basket and a free throw to stay within 15 points (25-10) with 9:40 to go, then Nebraska went on another run, this time 18-3, to lead by 30 points (43-13) with 5:21 left. At that point, the game was over. I can't remember the last time Michigan trailed by 30 points in the 1<sup>st</sup> half. It was humiliating. Nebraska led by 20 at halftime, 45-25, and they let Michigan go on a couple mini-runs every now and then, but they never let their lead get below 19 points until the 5:23 mark in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half, when Michigan got as close as 15 points (70-55). They pushed their lead back up past 20 points, cruising to a 20-point win.

### **Stats**

[The game stats for the Wisconsin game](#) were decent. Michigan shot pretty well overall (23-for-51 = 45.1%), they shot 3-pointers pretty well (7-for-20 = 35.0%), and they shot free throws pretty well (19-for-25 = 76.0%). They won the rebounding battle (34-28), and tied in the turnover battle (12-12). They won this game with pretty good shooting and rebounding.

[The game stats for the Nebraska game](#) were mediocre. Michigan shot poorly overall (20-for-62 = 32.3%), they shot 3-pointers pretty well (8-for-24 = 33.3%), and they shot free throws pretty well (11-for-15 = 73.3%). They lost the rebounding battle (43-39) and the turnover battle (14-9). They lost this game with poor overall shooting, rebounding, and too many turnovers.

### **Who Started?**

The starters for the Wisconsin game were [Nimari Burnett](#), [Dug McDaniel](#), [Olivier Nkamhoua](#), [Tarris Reed, Jr.](#), and [Terrance Williams II](#). McDaniel didn't travel with the team for the Nebraska game (indefinite "road suspension"), so [Jaelin Llewellyn](#) started in his place.

### **Who Looked Good?**

No Michigan player hit double figures in both games this week.

McDaniel hit double figures in the one game he played in (Wisconsin), with 16 points. On the downside, he shot poorly (6-for-15 overall, 1-for-5 from deep), and he had 0 assists.

Burnett had one good game (18 points vs. Nebraska) and one decent game (8 points vs. Wisconsin). He was Michigan's leading scorer vs. Nebraska, and the only Michigan player to hit double figures in that game.

Reed had one good game (12 points vs. Wisconsin) and one decent game (9 points vs. Nebraska).

Williams had a couple decent games, with 10 and 9 points.

Llewellyn had a decent game as a starter vs. Nebraska (8 points), and a mediocre game (5 points) off the bench vs. Wisconsin. He shot decently vs. Wisconsin (2-for-4 overall, 1-for-3 from deep), but he was lousy vs. Nebraska (3-for-12 overall, 2-for-7 from deep).

[Will Tschetter](#) was a little ray of sunshine off the bench, with 11 and 8 points.

### **Who Looked Not-So-Good?**

Nkamhoua has a mediocre week, with 8 and 3 points. He shot reasonably well in the Wisconsin game (2-for-5 overall, 1-for-3 from deep), but he was horrible in the Nebraska game (1-for-10 overall, 0-for-3 from deep). On the positive side, he was the leading rebounder in both games, with 12 and 10.

[Tray Jackson](#) had 2 points off the bench in each game, but he did it on terrible shooting: 0-for-2 vs. Wisconsin (2-for-2 shooting free throws), and 0-for-5 overall, 0-for-1 from deep vs. Nebraska (2-for-2 shooting free throws). Michigan needs a lot more production from him.

### **Who Else Played?**

[Harrison Hochberg](#) played the last 2 minutes of the Nebraska game, but didn't attempt a shot.

[Youssef Khayat](#) played the last minute of the Nebraska game, and missed his only shot attempt.

[Jackson Selvala](#) played the last 2 minutes of the Nebraska game, and scored the first points of his career, going 2-for-2 from the free throw line. Good for him!

[Cooper Smith](#) played the last 2 minutes of the Nebraska game, but didn't attempt a shot.

[George Washington III](#) played in both games, but didn't score. He didn't attempt a shot vs. Wisconsin, and he was 0-for-2 (both 3-point attempts) vs. Nebraska.

### **Who Didn't Play?**

[Jace Howard](#) was the only scholarship player who didn't play this week. Could he be injured?

[Ian Burns](#) was the only Scout Team player who didn't play this week.

### **What Does It Mean?**

While the Wisconsin win was fun (and really unexpected), it was a case of "too little, too late". With their 16<sup>th</sup> loss, Michigan now needs to win the rest of their regular season games (unlikely) and 2 games in the Big Ten Tournament to finish at 0.500 and be eligible for the NIT. Of course, they could go on a run in the Big Ten Tournament and win it all, guaranteeing them a spot in the Big Dance, but that's very unlikely. They have lost too many games to stand any realistic chance of playing in the postseason.

### **What's Next?**

The season drones on. This week, Michigan plays two games. On Tuesday (02/13/2024, 7:00 p.m. EST, Peacock), they play at (#10) Illinois, then on Saturday (02/17/2024, 8:00 p.m., FOX) they play Michigan State in Crisler Arena.

[Illinois](#) is currently 17-6 (8-4 in Big Ten). Michigan has already played Illinois, in Crisler Arena on 01/18/2024, and it didn't go well. Illinois won easily, 88-73. It will be even worse on the road. Staying within 20 points would be a moral victory.

[Michigan State](#) is currently 15-9 (7-6 in Big Ten). Michigan has already played MSU, on the road on 01/30/2024, and it didn't go well. MSU won easily, 81-62. It should be closer in Crisler Arena, but probably not close enough to matter. Who knows, maybe UM has another upset in them? After the Wisconsin win, it's not inconceivable.

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

Go Blue!