

## **Nothing But 'Net – Week #08 – 12/02/2024 – Fort Myers Tip-Off Champions**

Greetings from frigid Madison, Wisconsin. We're visiting our son here for Thanksgiving, and we're staying a couple extra days to go to the Michigan at Wisconsin basketball game on Tuesday night.

The University of Michigan men's basketball team played two games this past week, and they won both of them. [On Monday \(11/25/2024\), they beat Virginia Tech 75-63](#), then [on Wednesday \(11/27/2024\), they beat \(#22\) Xavier 78-53](#). Both games were in Suncoast Credit Union Arena in Fort Myers, Florida as part of the [Fort Myers Tip-Off](#) tournament. Michigan's record is now 6-1.

### **What Happened?**

Michigan won the Fort Myers Tip-Off tournament championship, and they did it convincingly against a couple pretty good teams. When I wrote my article last week, Xavier wasn't ranked, but this week they are: #22. So, Michigan beat a decent Virginia Tech team on Monday, then beat a pretty good ranked Xavier team on Wednesday. These are two important wins, both for Michigan's post-season tournament resume and for Michigan's confidence.

### **Game Flow**

The VT game was exciting and tense the whole way. VT led for most of the 1<sup>st</sup> half, and a good chunk of the 2<sup>nd</sup> half. Michigan kept close, but they had trouble "getting over the hump". Fortunately, they pulled ahead in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half, and managed to hold the lead until the final buzzer.

Michigan had an early 5-2 lead at the 17:46 mark, then they went cold. They let VT go on a long 10-0 run, and it was 12-5 with 13:01 to go. UM finally scored again at the 12:53 mark to pull within 4 points (12-8), but VT promptly pushed the lead to 8 points (16-8) with 12:16 left, then 11 points (21-10) at the 10:13 mark. The game was getting away from Michigan, but they didn't panic. They steadily ate away at the deficit, and got back within 4 points (21-17) with 8:46 to go in the half. VT kept the lead in the 4-6 point range for a while, but Michigan kept clawing their way back, and finally took the lead, 29-28, with 3:55 left. The two teams traded baskets the rest of the half, and Michigan led 34-33 at halftime.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> half didn't start well for Michigan. They immediately let VT go back on top (37-34) at the 19:13 mark. VT kept the lead in the 1-3 point range for a while, but Michigan finally tied it back up (46-46) with 14:53 to go. VT led for a little bit more, then UM went ahead for good (50-49) with 13:15 left. Once Michigan pushed the lead up to the 8-10 point range, they never let VT get any closer than 8 points the rest of the way, winning by 12 points.

The Xavier game started out close, before Michigan pulled away. Michigan took an early lead (10-4) at the 16:39 mark, but Xavier went on an 8-0 run to lead 12-10 with 15:22 to go. That was their only lead of the game. Michigan went back in front (13-12) just 13 seconds later, which started an 21-6 run that put Michigan ahead comfortably (31-18) with 6:33 left in the half. The teams traded baskets for the rest of the half, with Michigan leading 41-30 at halftime.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> half was all Michigan. Xavier got within 8 points a couple times, but Michigan always pushed the lead back into the 10-12 point range. At the 6:04 mark, Michigan pushed the lead up to 13 points (64-51), and that's when the game got away from Xavier. Over the last 9:13 of the game, Xavier made one field goal and two free throws, while Michigan scored 20 points. It was a dominant performance by Michigan.

### **Stats**

The [stats for the VT game](#) were just so-so. Michigan shot decently overall (25-for-62 = 40.3%), they shot 3-pointers poorly (10-for-34 = 29.4%), and they shot free throws decently

(15-for-20 = 75.0%). They lost the rebounding battle (41-38), but they won the turnover battle (15-19). They won this game with good defense and a slightly improved turnover margin.

The [stats for the Xavier game](#) were pretty good. Michigan shot well overall (30-for-61 = 49.2%), they shot 3-pointers very well (11-for-22 = 50.0%), but they shot free throws poorly (7-for-14 = 50.0%). They lost the rebounding battle (38-36), but they won the turnover battle (10-19). They won this game with great 3-point shooting and greatly improved turnover margin. It's very encouraging to see Michigan's turnovers trending downward.

### **Who Started?**

The starters for both games were [Nimari Burnett](#), [Tre Donaldson](#), [Roddy Gayle Jr.](#), [Vladislav Goldin](#), and [Danny Wolf](#).

### **Who Looked Good?**

No one for Michigan had two games in double figures, but 4 of the 5 starters hit double figures in one game.

Gayle was the leading scorer for Michigan in the VT game (20 points), but he only had 6 points vs. Xavier.

Wolf was the hero of the Xavier game, with 20 points and 14 rebounds. He shot very well in the Xavier game (8-for-12 overall, 4-for-5 from deep). Many of those 3-pointers came at a crucial time when Xavier was starting to creep back into the game. He had a mediocre game vs. VT, with 4 points.

Donaldson hit double figures (13) vs. Xavier, and 9 points vs. VT.

Goldin had a great game vs. Xavier (18 points, including his first career 3-pointer), and a decent game vs. VT (8 points). He must have listened to me, because he thought "dunk" instead of "layup" several times in both games.

Burnett almost hit double figures in the VT game (9 points), but he only had 5 points vs. Xavier.

[Will Tschetter](#) was the only bench player to hit double figures, with 10 points vs. VT. He only had 4 points vs. Xavier.

[L.J. Cason](#) almost hit double figures in both games, with 7 and 8 points.

[Rubin Jones](#) almost hit double figures in the VT game (8 points), but he only had 2 points vs. Xavier.

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

[Phat Phat Brooks](#) played in both games, but didn't attempt a shot.

[Justin Pippen](#) played in both games, and missed his only shot attempt, in the VT game.

[Sam Walters](#) played in both games, and scored 2 points on free throws in the Xavier game. Otherwise, he had a terrible week shooting: 0-for-3 (all 3-point attempts) in the VT game, and 0-for-3 overall, 0-for-2 from deep vs. Xavier.

### **Who Else Played?**

No one else played in either game.

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

The Scout team didn't get in either game: [Ian Burns](#), [Howard Easley Jr.](#), [Harrison Hochberg](#), [Jace Howard](#), and [Charlie May](#).

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

As I mentioned above, these were two important wins for Michigan, both for their post-season tournament resume and their confidence. Bringing home some hardware is a big bonus.

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

This week, Michigan plays two games, their first two Big Ten games of the season. On Tuesday (12/03/2024, 9:00 p.m. EST, Peacock), they play at (#15) Wisconsin, then on Saturday (12/07/2024, 2:00 p.m., FS1), they play Iowa in Crisler Arena.

[Wisconsin](#) is currently 8-0, with an impressive win over (#9) Arizona. They have a couple noteworthy players: John Tonje and Steven Crawl. Tonje has won a couple Big Ten Player of the Week awards already this season, and Crawl is one of the better big men in the league. Crawl is also a 7-footer, to go with another 7-footer and a 6'10" player, so Wisconsin has plenty of height. This is going to be Michigan's toughest test so far this season, and the Kohl Center is a tough place to pull off an upset. I'll be there in person cheering them on.

[Iowa](#) is currently 6-1, with no noteworthy wins. They don't have any noteworthy players, but they do have some height: a 6'10" guy and a 6'11" guy. I don't expect Michigan to beat Wisconsin on the road, so this is a crucial game. Michigan doesn't want to start the Big Ten season 0-2. Michigan can beat Iowa, especially in Crisler, but they'll need to play their "A" game.

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

Go Blue!