

Nothing But 'Net – Week #12 – 12/30/2024 – Non-Conference Finale Blowout, And Mid-Term Grades

The University of Michigan men's basketball team played one game this past week, and they won it. [On Sunday \(12/29/2024\), they beat Western Kentucky 112-64](#) in Crisler Arena. Michigan's record is now 10-3 (2-0 in Big Ten).

What Happened?

The WKU game was the last non-conference game of the season, and Michigan's chance to make it through the non-conference portion of the schedule with no "bad losses". They responded with an emphatic blowout.

Michigan's 3 losses have all been to quality opponents by 2 points or less, and are not considered to be "bad losses". It would have been better if a couple of them had been "close wins", but oh well.

Game Flow

Michigan never trailed in the WKU game, and steadily built their lead for the whole game. Their first big lead was 16-4 at the 16:17 mark, but WKU cut it to 4 points (18-14) with 14:38 left. That was the only time they got close, as Michigan built the lead up to 19 points (39-20) with 7:05 to go in the half, then 28 points (55-27) at the 2:37 mark. It was still a 28 point lead (59-31) at halftime.

The 2nd half was more of the same. UM started the half with an 8-2 run, to go up 34 points (67-33) at the 18:05 mark, then pushed the lead up to 39 points (83-44) with 11:50 to go. They pushed the lead through the 40s, and as high as 50 points (102-52) with 5:49 left. At this point, the game turned into a 3-point shooting contest, which Michigan won. The Scout Team came in for Michigan with 2:15 left, and they managed to score 7 more points, ending up with a nice 48 point win.

Stats

The [game stats](#) were very good. Michigan shot well overall (33-for-64 = 51.6%), they shot 3-pointers very well (19-for-40 = 47.5%), and they shot free throws pretty well (27-for-35 = 77.1%). They absolutely clobbered WKU on the boards (54-27), but they lost the turnover battle (17-14). They won this game with great shooting and rebounding.

Who Started?

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

Who Looked Good?

All five starters hit double figures, along with one bench player, so there were lots of players who looked good.

Burnett was tied for high scorer for Michigan with 17 points on great shooting: 5-for-8 overall, 5-for-7 from deep. He also had 5 rebounds, 3 assists, and 0 turnovers. A great performance.

Goldin was the other player who tied for high scorer, also with 17 points. He shot even better than Burnett: 7-for-8 overall, 2-for-2 from deep. Let's stop for a moment to consider Vlad's 3-point shooting. Keep in mind that he never attempted a 3-pointer in his first 4 seasons (1 at Texas Tech and 3 at Florida Atlantic). He made his first career 3-pointer (on his first career attempt) vs. Xavier, missed his second career attempt vs. Wisconsin, then went 2-for-2 in the WKU game. So now he's shooting 3-for-4 (75%) from deep for his career. Amazing!

Donaldson managed to score 12 points, but his shooting was off: 4-for-12 overall, 2-for-5 from deep. He was the leading rebounder for Michigan, with 11 rebounds.

Wolf also had 12 points, on much better shooting than Donaldson: 4-for-6 overall, 2-for-3 from deep. He had 10 rebounds, for a nice double-double.

Gayle was the 5th starter in double figures, with 11 points. He shot pretty well: 3-for-5 overall, 2-for-4 from deep.

[Sam Walters](#) was the bench player who hit double figures, with 13 points on decent shooting: 4-for-8 overall, 2-for-6 from deep.

[L.J. Cason](#) almost hit double figures, with 9 points.

[Will Tschetter](#) had 7 points, on terrible shooting: 1-for-4, all from deep. The rest of his points were from 4-for-4 shooting from the free throw line.

[Justin Pippen](#) also had 7 points, on decent shooting: 2-for-4, all from deep.

[Jace Howard](#) had 4 points.

[Phat Phat Brooks](#) played for 7 minutes and had 3 points, on 3-for-4 shooting from the free throw line.

Who Looked Not-So-Good?

All the mainstream players looked OK.

Who Else Played?

[Ian Burns](#) played for 2 minutes, but didn't attempt a shot.

[Howard Eisley Jr.](#) played for 1 minute, and missed his only shot attempt.

[Harrison Hochberg](#) played for 2 minutes, but didn't attempt a shot.

[Charlie May](#) played for 2 minutes, but didn't attempt a shot.

Who Didn't Play?

[Rubin Jones](#) is apparently injured, and didn't play.

What Does It Mean?

This was an important game for Michigan to not lose. It assured that Michigan won't have a "bad loss" for the first time in 4 seasons, and it gave Michigan another win. WKU is a decent opponent, and this win will look good at the end of the season.

At this point, Michigan is looking good for making the NCAA Tournament, but there's still a lot of basketball left to be played: 18 Big Ten games.

Mid-Term Grades

This is not quite the exact middle of the season, with 13 games played and 18 left to go, but it's a good natural breakpoint, at the end of the non-conference portion of the schedule and before the conference portion starts up again. Here are the mid-term grades:

Freshman Eligibility

- [Durrel "Phat Phat" Brooks](#) (C) – Phat Phat has gotten his chances to show what he can do, and he hasn't taken them. He's played in 10 games, and scored 9 points. He has plenty of potential, but he hasn't produced yet.
- [L.J. Cason](#) (B) – L.J. started the season with some solid games, but he has been uneven since then. He's played in 11 games, and scored 65 points.
- [Howard Eisley Jr.](#) (Inc.) – Howard is on the Scout Team, and hasn't played much. He's played in 3 games for 4 minutes, and he missed both of his shot attempts for the season.
- [Justin Pippen](#) (B-) – Justin missed the first 2 games with an injury, but since then he's played in 10 games, and scored 22 points. He looks calm and confident out there.

Sophomore Eligibility

- [Harrison Hochberg](#) (Inc.) – Harrison is on the Scout Team, and hasn't played much. He's played in 4 games for 7 minutes, and scored 4 points.
- [Charlie May](#) (Inc.) – Charlie is on the Scout Team, and hasn't played much. He's played in 4 games for 6 minutes, and hasn't attempted a shot yet.
- [Sam Walters](#) (B-) – Sam started the season with some solid games, but he has been uneven since then. He's played in 13 games, and scored 78 points.

Junior Eligibility

- [Nimari Burnett](#) (B) – Nimari has been steady-but-not-flashy so far this season. He's started all 13 games, and scored 125 points (9.6 points/game). He's the only starter who isn't averaging double digits. He's also the starter with the fewest turnovers (11).
- [Tre Donaldson](#) (A) – Tre has had several very good games, several good games, and a couple duds. Still, he is a leader out there, and he is running the offense very well. He's started all 13 games, and scored 160 points (12.3 points/game). He leads the team in assists (49), against 28 turnovers, not a bad ratio.
- [Roddy Gayle Jr.](#) (B+) – Roddy has had a few very good games, several good games, and a few duds. He's started all 13 games, and scored 161 points (12.4 points/game). He's a ferocious rebounder for his size (47 rebounds), and he's got 44 assists.
- [Will Tschetter](#) (B) – Will has done a nice job coming off the bench and giving the team a spark. He often plays (small) center, and he holds his own. He's played in all 13 games, and scored 89 points. He's the leading scorer among the bench players.
- [Danny Wolf](#) (A) – Danny has been the biggest surprise on the team so far this season. He was very good at Yale, but he's blossomed into a weapon at Michigan. He's started all 13 games, and scored 154 points (11.8 points/game). He's the leading rebounder on the team (132). He's 2nd on the team in assists, with 46. Not bad for a 7-footer. He often brings the ball upcourt in transition, and he plays "point center" quite often. He runs a mean pick-and-roll game with Goldin. On the downside, he occasionally gets a little too "creative" (crazy) with the ball, and he leads the team in turnovers (47).

Senior/Grad Eligibility

- [Ian Burns](#) (Inc.) – Ian is on the Scout Team, and hasn't played much. He's played in 4 games for 7 minutes, and missed his only shot attempt, a 3-pointer.
- [Vladislav Goldin](#) (A) – Vlad started the season slow, but he's gotten better each game for the last month. He's started all 13 games, and scored 181 points (13.9 points/game). He's the leading scorer on the team, and he has the best shooting percentage (69-for-101).

= 68.3%). He's the 2nd leading rebounder on the team (77), and the leading shot blocker (25). My only complaint about him: he often passes up a dunk for a short jumper or a layup, and he doesn't shoot as high a percentage on these short shots as he would with a dunk. Plus, a dunk at home is worth more than 2 points, since it gets the crowd and the rest of the team fired up.

- [Jace Howard](#) (C-) – Jace is a scholarship player, but he gets playing time as if he were on the Scout Team. He's played in 5 games for 19 minutes, and he's scored 4 points.
- [Rubin Jones](#) (B-) – Rubin has been the most disappointing of the transfer players so far this season. He's played in 11 games, and scored 40 points (3.6 points/game).

What's Next?

This week, Michigan only plays one game, resuming Big Ten play. On Saturday (01/04/2025, 8:00 p.m. EST, FOX), they play at USC.

[USC](#) is currently 9-4 (1-1 in Big Ten), with no impressive wins, and a questionable loss to Cal. They have one noteworthy player: Terrance Williams II, who played for 4 seasons at Michigan, with mixed results. He's doing well this season, averaging 10.6 points/game and 4.6 rebounds/game, with decent shooting numbers. He's going to be highly motivated to beat his former team. USC doesn't have much height (two 6'10" players), but they have an impressive collection of 6'6" – 6'8" players. This is going to be a tough game, especially on the road. This is a team that Michigan can beat, but they need to play a clean game, with not too many silly turnovers and reasonable shooting percentages. They can't afford 19 turnovers or 4-for-32 3-point shooting.

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

Go Blue!