

Nothing But 'Net – Week #14 – 01/13/2025 – Beating Up The Old Pac-12

The (#24) University of Michigan men's basketball team played two games this past week, and they won both of them. [On Tuesday \(01/07/2025\), they beat \(#22\) UCLA 94-75 in Los Angeles](#), then [on Sunday \(01/12/2025\), they beat Washington 91-75](#) in Crisler Arena. Michigan's record is now 13-3 (5-0 in Big Ten).

What Happened?

See that "(#24)" up there in the first line? Yes, Michigan is ranked again, sooner than I thought possible. They were ranked #14 in Week #6 (12/09/2024), then they lost to Arkansas, which dropped them to #24 the next week, then they lost to Oklahoma, which dropped them out of the rankings the week after that. I figured it would be late January before they cracked the Top 25 again, but here they are. Thankfully, this time they didn't lose a game immediately after getting ranked again.

The last three games that Michigan has played have been against new members of the Big Ten that used to be in the old Pac-12: USC, UCLA, and Washington. Michigan has beaten up all three of them. Welcome to the Big Ten!

Game Flow

Michigan led UCLA for the entire 1st half, often by double digits, but UCLA caught up and went ahead in the 2nd half, and the game was close for quite a while. Fortunately, Michigan surged in the last few minutes to win comfortably.

Once again, Michigan started the game on fire. They jumped out to an early 13-2 lead at the 15:16 mark, and pushed it up to 15 points (28-13) with 8:28 to go. They got the lead as high as 18 points, and kept it in the 12-14 point range for most of the rest of the 1st half, but UCLA cut it to 10 points (47-37) at halftime.

The start of the 2nd half was a nightmare. It took UCLA less than 6 minutes to catch Michigan and pass them, going up 52-51 at the 14:17 mark. That's a 15-4 run. Ouch. UCLA pushed their lead to 4 points (55-51) in 5 seconds (14:12 to go), but that was when Michigan woke up and started fighting back. UM tied it up (57-57) with 13:17 left, and then the game was close for the next 4 minutes, with several ties and lead changes, and neither team going ahead by more than 3 points. With 9:22 to go, Michigan was up by 1 point (63-62), then they went on a 7-0 run to get some breathing room, 70-62, at the 8:18 mark. They pushed the lead up to 12 points (76-64) with 7:23 to go, and kept the lead between 9-11 for the next 3 minutes. UM led 82-71 with 4:45 left, then they put the game away with a 6-0 run to make it 88-71 at the 2:55 mark. They outscored UCLA 6-4 in the last 3 minutes to win by 19 points. It was a huge win.

Michigan had a harder time against Washington than they did against UCLA. They led for all but 18 seconds of the game, but they couldn't pull away from Washington until the last couple minutes. Washington's one lead was 5-4 at the 18:13 mark, but it only lasted until the 17:55 mark, when Michigan went back ahead for good, 6-5. Michigan pushed the lead up into the 6-8 point range, and kept it there until the 11:16 mark, when Washington crept within 3 points, 21-18. The Michigan lead was still only 3 points (29-26) with 7:43 to go, when Michigan pushed the lead up to 9 points (38-29) with 5:57 left. The teams traded baskets the rest of the half, and Michigan led by 10 points (48-38) at halftime.

The teams continued to trade baskets to start the 2nd half, with Michigan keeping the lead in the 9-11 point range. With 17:24 to go, Michigan led by 10 points (57-47). No one scored for the next 3+ minutes, until Washington finally scored to make it 57-49 at the 13:43 mark. Michigan kept the lead in the 12-14 point range for a while, and it was 12 points (72-60) with 8:39 left. Michigan went on a nice 7-0 run to put the game out of reach, 79-60, at the 7:45 mark. Washington didn't give up, but they never got any closer than 15 points the rest of the way, losing by 16 points.

Stats

[The stats for the UCLA game](#) were very good. Michigan shot well overall (32-for-52 = 61.5%), they shot 3-pointers very well (15-for-28 = 53.6%), and they shot free throws well (15-for-21 = 71.4%). They won the rebounding battle handily (35-27), but they lost the turnover battle badly (16-6). They won this game with good shooting and rebounding.

[The stats for the Washington game](#) were pretty good. Michigan shot well overall (29-for-55 = 52.7%), they shot 3-pointers pretty well (11-for-29 = 37.9%), and they shot free throws just OK (22-for-32 = 68.7%). They won the rebounding battle (36-34) and the turnover battle (11-12). They won this game with good shooting.

Who Started?

The starters for the UCLA game were [Nimari Burnett](#), [Tre Donaldson](#), [Vladislav Goldin](#), [Rubin Jones](#), and [Danny Wolf](#). Jones started in place of [Roddy Gayle Jr.](#), who had a minor injury and missed the UCLA game. Gayle returned to the starting lineup for the Washington game.

Note: This was the first change to the starting lineup since the exhibition games. That's a good thing.

Who Looked Good?

Goldin was the star this week. He was the leading scorer in both games, with 36 points (a career high) vs. UCLA and 19 points vs. Washington. He was fantastic in the UCLA game, shooting 13-for-18 overall, 1-for-2 from deep, and 9-for-11 from the free throw line. Awesome! He also shot well in the Washington game: 6-for-7 overall, 1-for-2 from deep, and 6-for-8 from the free throw line. He was really fired up in the UCLA game, with several emphatic dunks, followed by great reactions. He was described as "angry Vlad", but I prefer the nickname "mad Vlad". When he plays with emotion, he's a beast.

Donaldson had a great game vs. UCLA (20 points, a career high), but a mediocre game vs. Washington (6 points). He shot well vs. UCLA: 7-for-11 overall, 6-for-10 from deep.

Burnett had a great week: 17 points vs. UCLA and 16 points vs. Washington. He was almost perfect for the week shooting: 5-for-6 overall, 3-for-4 from deep vs. UCLA, and 6-for-6 overall, 4-for-4 from deep vs. Washington. When almost everyone else on the team was having trouble making a 3-pointer in the Washington game, Burnett saved the day.

Gayle only played in one game this week (Washington), but he scored 15 points.

Wolf had two good games, but he wasn't the star in either game for a change. He had 12 points vs. UCLA, and 11 points vs. Washington. He was the leading rebounder in both games (8 in each), and he had the most assists in the UCLA game (6).

[Sam Walters](#) was the only bench player to hit double figures this week, with 12 points vs. Washington. He shot 3-for-6 from deep. He only had 3 points vs. UCLA.

[Will Tschetter](#) had one pretty good game (7 points vs. Washington) and one mediocre game (3 points vs. UCLA).

[Justin Pippen](#) scored 5 points vs. Washington, but didn't attempt a shot vs. UCLA.

Who Looked Not-So-Good?

Jones had 3 points vs. UCLA, and 0 points vs. Washington.

Who Else Played?

[L.J. Cason](#) played in both games, but didn't attempt a shot in either.

Who Didn't Play?

[Phat Phat Brooks](#) and [Jace Howard](#) were the scholarship players who didn't play in either game.

None of the Scout Team players played in either game: [Ian Burns](#), [Howard Easley Jr.](#), [Harrison Hochberg](#), and [Charlie May](#).

What Does It Mean?

These were two important wins for Michigan, especially the UCLA game. Beating a ranked UCLA team on their famous home court was huge. Scoring 94 points on them was even bigger, since they had been holding opponents to an average of 57 points/game. UCLA led the Pac-12 in scoring defense for the last 3 seasons, and they were leading the Big Ten in scoring defense this season, but Michigan shredded them.

It's still early in the Big Ten season, but at this point there are only 2 teams that are undefeated in Big Ten play: Michigan and Michigan State, both 5-0. Purdue is 5-1, and everyone else has at least 2 losses. It's great to be in a title race for a change.

There's still a lot of basketball to be played, but Michigan's chances for the NCAA Tournament are looking good. They probably need to win at least 9 Big Ten games, and they're more than halfway there.

What's Next?

This week, Michigan plays two games. On Thursday (01/16/2025, 7:00 p.m. EST, FS1), they play at Minnesota, then on Sunday (01/19/2025, 2:00 p.m., BTN), they play Northwestern in Crisler Arena.

[Minnesota](#) is currently 8-8 (0-5 in Big Ten), with no impressive wins, and sad losses to North Texas, Wichita State, and Wake Forest. They have one noteworthy player (Dawson Garcia), and a little bit of height (Garcia is 6'11" and another 6'10" player). Minnesota is probably the worst team in the Big Ten this season, but they do well in their weird old gym (Williams Arena, aka "The Barn"), so Michigan can't afford to take them lightly.

[Northwestern](#) is currently 10-6 (1-4 in Big Ten), with impressive wins over (#19) Illinois and Georgia Tech, and sad losses to Dayton, Butler, and Penn State. They don't have any noteworthy players, but they do have some height: two 7-footers and a 6'10" guy. This is another team that Michigan should be able to beat, but they have to be careful.

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

Go Blue!