Nothing But 'Net – Week #16 – 01/27/2025 – Thrashed

The (#21) University of Michigan men's basketball team played one game this past week, and they lost it, badly. On Friday (01/24/2025), they lost at (#11) Purdue 91-64.   Michigan's record is now 14-5 (6-2 in Big Ten).

What Happened?

Purdue just thrashed Michigan, from start to finish. They jumped out to a big early lead, built on it steadily the whole 1st half, then just traded baskets with Michigan for the whole 2nd half to win big. It was a dominating performance, and Michigan was helpless to do anything about it. It was easily Michigan's worst game this season, by a long shot.

Game Flow

Michigan won the opening toss, committed their first turnover (of many) just 13 seconds in, and Purdue went down and scored an easy basket. 2-0. Next possession, another turnover, and it's 4-0 with 56 seconds gone. When they weren't turning the ball over, Michigan was missing 3-pointers. They missed two of them, Purdue got the rebound of the 2nd miss, and they scored again. 6-0 at the 18:28 mark. Michigan finally scored, to make it 6-2 with 18:04 left. More missed 3-pointers and more turnovers, and just like that, it's 13-2 with 16:33 to go. At this point, the game was essentially over. Michigan never got much closer than 9 points down, and the Purdue lead blossomed to 20 (29-9 at the 11:18 mark) then 29 (44-15 with 5:29 to go). Purdue kept the lead in the 24-26 point range for the rest of the half, up 51-26 at halftime.

The 2nd half was a little better, but only because Purdue backed off a bit. They got their lead as high as 30 points, and kept it between 24-26 points for the rest of the game.

Stats

The game stats were horrible. Michigan shot poorly overall (20-for-54 = 37.0%), they shot 3-pointers very poorly (6-for-29 = 20.7%), but they shot free throws well (18-for-21 = 85.7%). They won the rebounding battle (35-30), but they lost the turnover battle badly (22-6). They lost this game due to bad shooting and way too many turnovers. The final 3-point shooting stats don't tell the story; Michigan missed their first four 3-point shots, made #5, then missed the next 11 attempts in the first half. That's right, they shot 1-for-16 (6.2%) from deep in the 1st half.

Who Started?

The starters were Nimari Burnett, Tre Donaldson, Roddy Gayle Jr., Vladislav Goldin, and Danny Wolf.

Who Looked Good?

How can you say that anyone looked good in a 27-point blowout loss? Actually, 4 of the starters hit double figures, and 3 of those 4 players shot decently, but still…

Goldin was the high scorer for Michigan, with 14 points. He shot OK: 5-for-10 overall, 0-for-2 from deep.

Donaldson had 11 points, on pretty good shooting: 3-for-6 overall, 3-for-5 from deep.

Gayle also had 11 points, on pretty good shooting: 3-for-5 overall, 1-for-2 from deep.

Sam Walters chipped in 6 points off the bench. He shot decently: 2-for-5 overall, 2-for-4 from deep.

Who Looked Not-So-Good?

Wolf was the biggest problem in this game. He shot terribly (1-for-7 overall, 0-for-5 from deep), and he had 4 turnovers. That's two bad games in a row for him.

Burnett scored 11 points, but he shot terribly: 3-for-10 overall, 0-for-4 from deep.

Who Else Played?

Will Tschetter scored 4 points.

Rubin Jones scored 1 point, but he was the leading rebounder for Michigan, with 8.

L.J. Cason scored 2 points.

Justin Pippen scored 0 points, on 0-for-2 shooting.

Who Didn't Play?

Phat Phat Brooks and Jace Howard were the scholarship players who didn't play.

None of the Scout Team players played: Ian Burns, Howard Eisley Jr., Harrison Hochberg, and Charlie May.

What Does It Mean?

This is Michigan's first definitive loss. The other 4 losses (Wake Forest by 2, Arkansas by 2, Oklahoma by 1, and Minnesota by 3 in overtime) all could have been wins, but the Purdue loss was not even close.

Michigan can forget about contending for the Big Ten title. It looks like Michigan State is going to run away with it, and Purdue looks good for 2nd place. Hopefully, Michigan can stay in the top half of the standings and finish above 0.500 in the league. That will certainly get them into the NCAA Tournament with a reasonable seed.

I worry about the mental state of this team and their confidence. They looked solid after their West Coast trip (wins over USC and UCLA) and the Washington game, but since then they've looked tentative and out of sorts. The Minnesota loss almost carried over to a loss against Northwestern, and they looked whipped against Purdue.

What's Next?

This week, Michigan plays two games. On Monday (01/27/2025, 6:30 p.m., BTN), they play Penn State in Crisler Arena, then on Saturday (02/01/2025, 3:30 p.m., Fox), they play at Rutgers.

Penn State is currently 13-7 (3-6 in Big Ten), with impressive wins over Virginia Tech and (#8) Purdue, and unimpressive losses to Rutgers and Iowa. They have one noteworthy player (Ace Baldwin Jr.) and some height (a 6'11" player and a 7-footer). This is a game that Michigan has to win to stay in the top half of the standings, and it's a game they can win, if they can get their old swagger back.

Rutgers is currently 10-10 (3-6 in Big Ten), with impressive wins over Notre Dame, Seton Hall, and UCLA, and unimpressive losses to St. John's, Kennesaw State, Princeton, and Penn State. They don't have any noteworthy players, but they do have some height: three 6'10" players. This is another game that Michigan needs to win to stay in the upper half of the standings, and it's a game they can win. Sure, it's tough to win on the road in the Big Ten, but Michigan has already won at Wisconsin, USC, and UCLA.

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

Go Blue!