

Nothing But 'Net – Week #17 – 02/03/2025 – Hanging In There

The University of Michigan men's basketball team played two games this past week, and they won both of them. [On Monday \(01/27/2025\), they beat Penn State 76-72](#) in Crisler Arena, then [on Saturday \(02/01/2025\), they beat Rutgers 66-63](#) in Piscataway, NJ. Michigan's record is now 16-5 (8-2 in Big Ten).

What Happened?

Michigan didn't win big this week, but at least they won. At the halfway point of the Big Ten schedule, they're currently in 3rd place in the Big Ten, and they're hanging in there in the standings. They won two games against teams that they were expected to beat, and they looked decent doing it. It's always hard to win a game on the road in the Big Ten, even against a lower-division team like Rutgers, so that was a big win.

Game Flow

The PSU game was close the whole way, with Michigan leading for most of the first 14 minutes. Michigan would open up a 3-5 point lead, then PSU would tie it up. This happened 4 or 5 times. With 6:18 left to go in the 1st half, Michigan led 27-25. Penn State went ahead 28-27 at the 5:54 mark, for their only lead in the 1st half. Michigan promptly went back ahead, but PSU tied the score at halftime, 35-35.

In the 2nd half, Michigan finally got some breathing room. They got their lead as high as 8 points (52-44) at the 13:46 mark, and kept the lead in the 4-6 point range for the next 8 minutes. With 5:09 left, Michigan still led by 4 points (65-61), but things turned ugly. PSU hit three 3-pointers in a row, while Michigan could only manage a single 2-point basket, and in less than 2 minutes PSU went from 4 down to 3 up: 70-67 with 3:12 to go. PSU added a pair of free throws, to go up by 5 points (72-67) with 2:08 to go, and things were looking grim. However, look at the final score: 76-72. Yes, Michigan outscored PSU 9-0 in the last 2:08 to win by 4. The crowd was as loud as it's been in Crisler in a couple years, and it was very exciting.

The 1st half of the Rutgers game was a see-saw battle, with lots of ties and lead changes. Neither team got more than 7 points ahead, but Rutgers had their last lead of the game with 5:48 left, 21-20. Michigan went on a 12-4 run to end the half, up 32-25. They held onto that lead for the rest of the game, although they never got it higher than 8 points (38-30 at the 15:58 mark), and Rutgers got within 2 points a couple times: 46-44 with 7:53 left, and 48-46 with 6:45 to go. Michigan kept the lead in the 5-7 point range for most of the rest of the game, and made just enough plays to hold Rutgers off for the win.

Stats

[The stats for the PSU game](#) were just OK. Michigan shot pretty well overall (30-for-62 = 48.4%), they shot 3-pointers well (12-for-28 = 42.9%), but they shot free throws terribly (4-for-9 = 44.4%). They lost the rebounding battle (34-26), but won the turnover battle (9-18). They won this game with 3-point shooting and a reasonable number of turnovers.

[The stats for the Rutgers game](#) were mediocre. Michigan shot pretty well overall (22-for-46 = 47.8%), they shot 3-pointers decently (7-for-20 = 35.0%), and they shot free throws pretty well (15-for-21 = 71.4%). They lost the rebounding battle (37-36) and the turnover battle (17-12). They won this game at the free throw line, if you can believe it. They scored 15 points at the free throw line vs. 9 (for 13) for Rutgers.

Who Started?

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

Who Looked Good?

After a few lousy games in a row, Wolf looked better this week. He's still not clicking like he did for the first half of the season, but he looked better. He was the leading scorer in the Rutgers game with 16 points, to go with 14 rebounds, for a nice double-double. He shot pretty well: 5-for-9 overall, 1-for-3 from deep. He wasn't as sharp in the PSU game, with 11 points (and 9 rebounds) on mediocre shooting: 4-for-11 overall, 2-for-2 from deep. The 3-pointers really helped. Still, it was good to see him break out of his slump.

Donaldson was the hero in the PSU game, with 21 points, including 7 of the 9 points in the final 9-0 run that won the game. He also had 7 assists and 4 steals, with no turnovers. He scored 10 points vs. Rutgers, with 6 more assists, but 3 turnovers.

Goldin was sick for the PSU game, and although he started, he only played for 17 minutes and he only scored 4 points. He was a lot healthier vs. Rutgers, with 14 points and 6 rebounds in 26 minutes of playing time.

Burnett was the only other player to hit double figures this week, with 10 points vs. PSU. He only had 3 points vs. Rutgers, and he shot poorly in both games: 4-for-10 overall, 2-for-8 from deep vs. PSU, and 1-for-3 overall, 0-for-2 from deep vs. Rutgers.

Gayle almost hit double figures vs. PSU (9 points), but he only had 6 points vs. Rutgers. He also shot poorly in both games: 4-for-11 overall, 0-for-2 from deep vs. PSU, and 1-for-5 overall, 0-for-3 from deep vs. Rutgers.

[Will Tschetter](#) chipped in 7 and 6 points off the bench.

[Sam Walters](#) chipped in 5 and 6 points off the bench.

[Rubin Jones](#) chipped in 6 and 2 points off the bench.

[Justin Pippen](#) chipped in 3 points in each game.

Who Looked Not-So-Good?

Nobody looked not-so-good this week.

Who Else Played?

[L.J. Cason](#) played for 3 minutes in the PSU game, but didn't attempt a shot.

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?

These were games that Michigan had to win, and they took care of business. They weren't dominant wins, and they weren't against upper-division opponents, but they were important wins. They kept Michigan in the upper half of the Big Ten standings, and they got Michigan closer to their goal of making it back to the NCAA Tournament. There are still a lot of games to play (10 regular season games, to be precise), and most of the remaining games are against upper-division teams, so Michigan still has some work to do.

What's Next?

This week, Michigan plays two games. On Wednesday (02/05/2025, 6:30 p.m., BTN), they play (#16) Oregon in Crisler Arena, then on Saturday (02/08/2025, 1:00 p.m., CBS), they play at Indiana.

[Oregon](#) is currently 16-6 (5-6 in Big Ten), with impressive wins over (#20) Texas A&M and (#9) Alabama, and unimpressive losses to UCLA (twice), (#22) Illinois (by a lot: 109-77), Minnesota, and Nebraska. They don't have any noteworthy players, and they don't have much height: just one 7-footer. This will be Michigan's first chance in a while to beat a ranked Big Ten team. They beat (#11) Wisconsin on the road back in December, and they beat (#22) UCLA on the road in early January, but they got thrashed by (#11) Purdue a couple weeks ago. This is a game that Michigan can win, but they need to play a lot more consistently than they have for the last couple weeks. Oregon is ranked #16 for a reason, and Michigan will need to play a good clean game to beat them.

[Indiana](#) is currently 14-8 (5-6 in Big Ten), with no impressive wins, and unimpressive losses to Louisville, Nebraska, Iowa, Illinois (by a lot: 94-69), Northwestern, and Maryland. They don't have any noteworthy players, but they do have some height: a 6'10" player, and two 7-footers. It's always a challenge when Michigan plays IU, especially in Bloomington. This isn't a dominant Indiana team, but they always seem to give Michigan trouble. Michigan can win this game, but they need to play a solid game.

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

Go Blue!