

Nothing But 'Net – Week #13 – 01/05/2026 – Two More Dominant Wins

The (#2) University of Michigan men's basketball team played two games this past week, and they won both of them. [On Monday \(12/29/2025\), they beat McNeese 112-71](#), then [on Friday \(01/02/2026\), they beat \(#24\) USC 96-66](#). Both games were in Crisler Arena. Michigan's record improves to 13-0 (3-0 in Big Ten).

What Happened?

Michigan won two games, by 41 and 30 points, which is dominant. The funny thing is, now that we've gotten spoiled by Michigan's dominance, the two wins don't seem as impressive as what we've gotten used to. If Michigan hadn't put in the Scout Team for the last 7 minutes of the McNeese game, they would have surely scored at least 125 points, and won by at least 50. Michigan didn't shoot very well vs. USC, and they still won by 30 points. If Michigan had shot their season average in that game, they certainly would have scored over 100 points and won by at least 40. They're that good: they can play their "scrubs and subs" for the last 7 minutes as still win by 41. They can have an "off" shooting night and still win by 30.

Game Flow

The McNeese game looked like a lot of the other Michigan games this season: Michigan never trailed, got ahead early, and pushed their lead to 10, 20, 30, 40, 50, and finally, 52 points. They hit the 10-point lead (15-5) at the 15:55 mark, hit the 20-point lead (38-18) at the 7:26 mark, hit the 30-point lead (59-29) at the 0:41 mark, led by 31 at halftime (60-29), hit the 40-point lead (69-29) at the 18:07 mark, passed the 50-point lead (88-37) at the 11:27 mark, and hit the high-water mark with 9:01 left: a 52-point lead (92-40). The Scout Team came in for the last 7 minutes, and McNeese managed to get the deficit down to 41 points by the end of the game.

Michigan had several nice scoring runs in this game, but the best was the 21-0 run that started with 1:29 left in the 1st half. McNeese scored to pull within 26 points (55-29). Michigan scored the last 5 points of the 1st half, then the first 16 points of the 2nd half, and suddenly the score was 76-29 (a 47 point lead) with 16:49 to go. At that point, the game was over.

The USC game was similar to the McNeese game, since Michigan never trailed, got ahead early, and pushed their lead the rest of the game, but it wasn't as quick or as decisive as the McNeese game. Michigan played excellent defense all game, but especially for the first 6:31 of the game, and they led 11-0 at the 13:29 mark. In that period, USC committed 6 turnovers, missed 8 shots, and committed 5 fouls and a technical foul on their coach. If Michigan hadn't been cold, they would have been up by 20-25 points. Once they finally scored, USC managed to sneak back within 5 points (15-10) with 12:08 to go. That was as close as they got. Michigan kept the lead around 10 points for a while, then they finally started to pull away. With 3:23 left in the half, Michigan was only up by 10 (34-24), but they went on a nice 15-7 run to lead by 18 at halftime, 49-31.

The first 5 minutes of the 2nd half were even, and Michigan still led by 18 points (57-39) at the 14:46 mark. That's when Michigan pulled away again; they pushed the lead into the 26-28 point range, and kept it there for the rest of the game, finally pushing it to 30 points with 2 seconds left.

Our old buddy Terrance Williams II played more than 25 minutes for USC, but he wasn't much of a factor. He scored 5 points and grabbed 4 rebounds. He didn't get much of a reaction, positive or negative, from the Michigan fans. Nobody misses him.

Stats

The [stats for the McNeese game](#) were solid. Michigan shot very well overall ($37/63 = 58.7\%$), they shot well from 3-point range ($7/23 = 30.4\%$), and they shot free throws pretty well ($31/45 = 68.9\%$). They won the rebounding battle decisively (55-32), but they lost the turnover battle (15-9). They won this game with strong shooting and rebounding.

The [stats for the USC game](#) were just OK. Michigan shot decently overall ($31/65 = 47.7\%$), they shot 3-pointers poorly ($6/30 = 20.0\%$), and they shot free throws pretty well ($28/39 = 71.8\%$). They won the rebounding battle (40-35) and the turnover battle (11-21). They won this game with decent shooting and lots of defense.

Who Started?

The starters for both games were [Nimari Burnett](#), [Elliot Cadeau](#), [Morez Johnson Jr.](#), [Yaxel Lendeborg](#), and [Aday Mara](#).

Who Looked Good?

It was Morez Johnson Jr. Week! He tied his career high with 24 points vs. McNeese, then set a new career high the next game with 29 points vs. USC. In both games, he was unguardable. He was too quick and agile for the big men who tried to stop him, and too strong for the shorter players when they tried. He had excellent shooting stats: 8/12 overall vs. McNeese, and 10/12 overall, 1/2 from deep vs. USC. He also had 11 rebounds vs. McNeese, for a nice double-double. He was awesome.

Lendeborg had one good game (16 points vs. McNeese) and one decent game (8 points vs. USC). In all fairness, he only played for 18 minutes vs. USC, due to some sort of injury. He's been nursing a sore back all season. Still, his normally good shooting was "off" in the USC game: 3/10 overall, 1/7 from deep. He shot fine in the McNeese game: 6/10 overall, 1/2 from deep.

Mara also had one good game (13 points vs. McNeese) and one mediocre game (5 points vs. USC). Once again, he was very valuable on defense, guarding the rim.

Cadeau didn't score as much as usual (7 points in each game), but he did a nice job running the offense and playing tough defense.

Burnett had one good game (12 points vs. McNeese) and one lousy game (3 points vs. USC). Once again, in all fairness, he only played 14 minutes vs. USC, due to an injury. He banged his forehead against Roddy Gayle's knee, then against the floor.

[Trey McKenney](#) had a good week coming off the bench. He hit double figures in both games: 13 and 10 points. The only downside: He was 0/6 shooting 3-pointers, but 7/7 from 2-point range.

[Roddy Gayle Jr.](#) had a good week coming off the bench. He hit double figures in both games: 10 and 12 points.

[L.J. Cason](#) had a good week coming off the bench. He had 7 points vs. McNeese and 10 points vs. USC. His steal and layup with 2 seconds left in the USC game gave Michigan the 30-point win.

[Will Tschetter](#) had one good game (10 points vs. USC) and one quiet game (2 points vs. McNeese) coming off the bench.

Who Looked Not-So-Good?

All the mainstream players looked good this week.

Who Else Played?

[Howard Eisley Jr.](#) played in the final minute of the McNeese game, and missed his only shot attempt, a 3-pointer.

[Oscar Goodman](#) played for 7 minutes vs. McNeese and 3 minutes vs. USC. He missed all 3 of his shot attempts.

[Winters Grady](#) played for 7 minutes vs. McNeese and 3 minutes vs. USC. He missed his only shot attempt (a 3-pointer) vs. McNeese, but made 4/5 free throws, for 4 points. He shot 1/2 overall, 0/1 from deep, vs. USC, for 2 more points.

[Malick Kordel](#) played for 6 minutes vs. McNeese and 2 minutes vs. USC. He shot 2/2 vs. McNeese, for 4 points, and didn't attempt a shot vs. USC.

Who Didn't Play?

The Scout Team players who didn't play were: [Harrison Hochberg](#) and [Charlie May](#).

What Does It Mean?

These were two very important wins for several reasons: they were both against quality opponents, they were both by impressive margins, they kept Michigan undefeated overall and in Big Ten play, and they kept the team's confidence up there. Both these wins will look very nice on Michigan's NCAA Tournament resume.

The only bad news was the injuries to Lendeborg and Burnett. At this point, there isn't much information about how serious they are or if they'll miss any games.

This Week

This week, Michigan plays two games. On Tuesday (01/06/2026, 7:00 p.m., FS1), they play at Penn State, then on Saturday (01/10/2026, 1:00 p.m., CBS), they play Wisconsin in Crisler Arena.

[Penn State](#) is currently 9-5 (0-3 in Big Ten), with no impressive wins, and unimpressive losses to Providence, Indiana (113-72!), and Pittsburgh. They don't have any noteworthy players, but they do have some height: a 6'10" player and two 7-footers. This is a game that Michigan should win convincingly, even on the road. If Indiana can beat them by 31 points, Michigan can do the same.

[Wisconsin](#) is currently 9-5 (1-2 in Big Ten), with no impressive wins, and unimpressive losses to Oklahoma, TCU, and Villanova. They have a couple noteworthy players (John Blackwell and Nolan Winter) and quite a bit of height: three 6'10" players and two 7-footers. This should be a pretty challenging game for Michigan, but Wisconsin isn't any better than USC, so if Michigan can stay focused, they should be fine.

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

Go Blue!