

Nothing But 'Net – Week #14 – 01/12/2026 – You Can't Win 'Em All

The (#2) University of Michigan men's basketball team played two games this past week, and they won one and lost the other. [On Tuesday \(01/06/2026\), they won at Penn State 74-72](#), then [on Saturday \(01/10/2026\), they lost to Wisconsin 91-88](#) in Crisler Arena. Michigan's record is now 14-1 (4-1 in Big Ten).

What Happened?

You can't win 'em all, but we were hoping...

After many easy, stress-free, blowout wins against opponents large and small, Michigan's magic run just ran out of steam. They managed to sneak out a narrow road victory at Penn State, but they couldn't keep up with a red-hot Wisconsin team at home. Michigan didn't look anything like the team that was routinely blowing away all opponents by an average of 30+ points in either game this week. They were favored by about 20 points in each game, and they won by 2 and lost by 3. It was very disappointing.

Game Flow

Penn State led for the first 8 minutes, up by 6 points (12-6) at the 15:16 mark. Michigan tied it up (12-12) with 12:11 to go, then went ahead. They got their lead up to 10 points (34-24) at the 3:16 mark, and still led by 9 points (40-31) at halftime. Michigan kept the lead in the 10-12 point range for the first 10 minutes of the 2nd half, up by 11 points (63-52) at the 9:48 mark. That's when PSU went on an 8-0 run. They got within 3 points (63-60) with 7:13 to go, but Michigan pushed back. Michigan was up by 8 points (71-63) at the 4:01 mark, and it looked like they were going to coast home, when they gave up a 9-3 run to end the game. A little quick arithmetic shows that they only gave up 6 of the 8 points they led by, to win by 2. Still, it was a lot closer than predicted. PSU got off an errant 3-pointer at the buzzer that would have won the game, so Michigan barely escaped.

Michigan led Wisconsin early, up 21-10 at the 12:49 mark. They kept the lead in the 9-11 point range for a while, and were up by 14 points (31-17) with 7:38 to go in the half. That was the high point of the game. From there, Wisconsin steadily whittled away at the lead, trailing by only 1 point (38-37) at halftime. No problem, right? Michigan has been playing great in the first few minutes of the 2nd half all season. Not this time: Wisconsin came out of the locker room on fire, hitting their first 9 shots, many of them 3-pointers. They quickly went ahead, but Michigan hung around. When Wisconsin finally missed a shot, at the 14:33 mark, they were up by 3 points (62-59). Look at that scoring: Wisconsin outscored Michigan 25-21 in the first 5:27 of the half. That's incredible. If they had kept that up, they would have scored around 150 points. Fortunately, they cooled down, just a little, and Michigan managed to tie the game (65-65) at the 13:17 mark. Wisconsin went ahead for a couple minutes, but Michigan actually regained the lead (71-70) with 10:50 to go. Michigan went ahead by 3, but Wisconsin tied it up again (73-73) at the 8:56 mark. It was tied up again at 75-75, 77-77, 79-79, and 81-81. Michigan had their last lead (84-83) with 4:10 to go, and stayed close to Wisconsin down the stretch, but couldn't quite get the stop they needed or make the basket they needed. They were only down 2 points (90-88) with 15 seconds left, and 3 points (91-88) with 9 seconds left, but they missed a 3-pointer with 2 seconds left, and that was the game. It was a shame, especially when they had a large and vocal crowd rooting them on.

Stats

The [stats for the PSU game](#) were just OK. Michigan shot decently overall (26/47 = 45.6%), they shot 3-pointers OK (8/27 = 29.6%), and they shot free throws well enough (14/19 = 73.7%). They lost the rebounding battle, a rarity (43-37) and the turnover battle (12-10). They won this game (barely) with just enough shooting and just enough defense. They probably should have lost it.

The [stats for the Wisconsin game](#) were actually pretty good. Michigan shot decently overall ($29/62 = 46.8\%$), they shot 3-pointers pretty well ($8/25 = 32.0\%$), and they shot free throws very well ($22/24 = 91.7\%$). They won the rebounding battle (32-30) and the turnover battle (9-10). So, how did they lose this one? Defense. Wisconsin outshot them: $29/58 = 50.0\%$ overall, $15/33 = 45.5\%$ from deep. Michigan got Wisconsin to shoot the shots they wanted them to shoot, but Wisconsin made them. It's tough to beat a team that's as hot as Wisconsin was at the beginning of the 2nd half.

Who Started?

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

Who Looked Good?

Lendeborg hit double figures in both games, with 10 and 14 points. He didn't shoot well in the PSU game (3/9 overall, 0/4 from deep), but he did better vs. Wisconsin (4/9 overall, 1/2 from deep). Still, he wasn't really himself in either game. He might still be slowed down by the calf injury he suffered in the USC game.

Burnett was the only other starter to hit double figures in both games, with 12 and 10 points. For a good 3-point shooter, he had a mediocre week: 2/4 vs. PSU and 2/7 vs. Wisconsin.

Cadeau had one good game (19 points vs. Wisconsin, Michigan's high scorer) and one decent game (9 points vs. PSU). He single-handedly kept Michigan in the game when Wisconsin was on their rampage to start the 2nd half.

Johnson had one good game (18 points vs. Wisconsin) and one lousy game (3 points vs. PSU).

Mara had two decent games: 7 and 9 points. He also had 7 and 6 rebounds, and 4 and 2 blocked shots.

[Roddy Gayle Jr.](#) chipped in some points off the bench: 7 and 9 points.

[Trey McKenney](#) had one good game (12 points vs. PSU) and one mediocre game (7 points vs. Wisconsin). He shot pretty poorly getting those 7 points vs. Wisconsin: 2/8 overall, 1/6 from deep.

[L.J. Cason](#) had one very good game (14 points vs. PSU, Michigan's high scorer) and one lousy game (0 points vs. Wisconsin).

Who Looked Not-So-Good?

[Will Tschetter](#) was worthless this week, with 0 and 2 points.

Who Else Played?

No one else played.

Who Didn't Play?

The scholarship players who didn't play were: [Oscar Goodman](#), [Winters Grady](#), and [Malick Kordel](#).

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

What Does It Mean?

The first loss of the season always stings, but especially after a 14-game winning streak, and especially at home. Still, there might be a (small) upside to this loss: it might (maybe?) take some of the pressure off the team, now that their perfect season is ruined. Maybe they can get back to playing the way they did before the holiday break.

The loss to Wisconsin knocks Michigan out of 1st place in the Big Ten, and will certainly knock them out of the #2 spot in the AP Poll. Still, all of their goals are still ahead of them: they can still win the Big Ten regular season and tournament championships, and they can still shoot for the Final Four and beyond in the NCAA Tournament. They just don't have as much "wiggle room" as they had before.

This Week

This week, Michigan plays two games, on the road, out West. On Wednesday (01/14/2026, 10:30 p.m. EST, BTN), they play at Washington, then on Saturday (01/17/2026, 4:00 p.m. EST, NBC), they play at Oregon.

[Washington](#) is currently 10-6 (2-3 in Big Ten), with an impressive win over (#24) USC, and unimpressive losses to Baylor, Colorado, and Seattle. They don't have any noteworthy players, but they do have plenty of height: two 6'10" players, and four 6'11" players. This could be a very challenging game for Michigan. They haven't played very well in true road games so far, and the travel and jetlag issues with playing out West could be a factor.

[Oregon](#) is currently 8-8 (1-4 in Big Ten), with no impressive wins, and unimpressive losses to Stanford, San Diego State, Creighton, Rutgers, and Ohio State. They have one noteworthy player (Nate Bittle), and plenty of height: two 6'10" players, a 6'11" player, and a 7-footer (Bittle). This will certainly be a very challenging game for Michigan, for all the reasons listed for Washington and more: Oregon's bizarre, distracting floor.

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

Go Blue!