

Nothing But 'Net – Week #18 – 02/09/2026 – All Alone In First Place

The (#2) University of Michigan men's basketball team played two games this past week, and they won both of them. [On Thursday \(02/05/2026\), they beat Penn State 110-69](#) in Crisler Arena, then [on Sunday \(02/08/2026\), they won at Ohio State 82-61](#). Michigan's record improves to 22-1 (12-1 in Big Ten). This is Michigan's best 23-game record in program history. Michigan is all alone in 1st place in the Big Ten.

What Happened?

Michigan has been in 1st place in the Big Ten for the whole season, but they've been tied with a few other teams. When they beat (#7) Michigan State on 01/30/2026, they handed MSU their 2nd loss in Big Ten play, knocking them out of 1st place. When MSU beat (#5) Illinois in overtime on 02/07/2026, they handed Illinois their 2nd loss in Big Ten play, knocking them out of 1st place, and leaving Michigan all alone in 1st place. Michigan didn't have the "Rivalry Hangover" that MSU did, when they lost their next game (at Minnesota) after losing to Michigan. Instead, Michigan won both games this week convincingly.

Game Flow

The PSU game was another of those "get ahead early and crush the life out of the opponent" games that Michigan has enjoyed this season. It was great to see another dominating performance, since Michigan has been winning by "only" 10-12 points lately, ever since the 30-point win over USC on 01/02/2026. In this one, PSU led exactly once, 2-0, before Michigan overwhelmed them. Michigan went on a sharp 15-0 run to make the score 15-2 at the 12:41 mark. Yes, PSU only scored 2 points in the first 7:19 of the game. Michigan kept building on their lead, pushing it up past 20 points (35-14) with 6:13 to go, and over 30 points (53-22) at the 1:04 mark. They led by 32 points (56-24) at halftime.

The 2nd half was more of the same. Michigan never let the lead go below 30 points, and pushed it over 40 points (73-32) at the 15:27 mark. At this point, the game was over. Michigan kept the lead in the 39-41 point range for the rest of the game, getting it as high as 46, and coasting to a 41-point victory. It really helped that PSU missed their first 14 3-point attempts. They finally hit a 3-pointer with 7:22 left in game, finishing at 2/20.

Michigan never trailed in the OSU game, although it took a while for them to pull away. Michigan led 2-0, OSU tied it 2-2, and Michigan went ahead for good 4-2 at the 18:51 mark. Michigan kept the lead in the 4-6 point range for the next few minutes, although OSU crept within 2-3 point a couple times. The turning point was the 6:38 mark: Michigan was only up by 2 points (26-24), when [Aday Mara](#) made the first 3-pointer of his career! That sparked a Michigan rally, and they pushed their lead up as high as 12 points, settling for a 10-point lead (44-34) at halftime. Incidentally, Mara made another 3-pointer at the 4:00 mark

Michigan toyed with OSU for the entire 2nd half. They kept the lead above 10 the rest of the way, mostly in the 12-14 point range for the first 13 minutes of the half. They were up by 12 points (64-52) with 6:57 to go, when they surged ahead. They pushed their lead up to 20 points (72-52) at the 4:14 mark, then ran the clock out to win by 21 points.

By the way: remember the loudmouth OSU reserve guard (Colin White) who predicted an OSU victory for the first game, in Crisler? Well, he didn't even get in this game.

Stats

[The stats for the Penn State game](#) were fabulous. Michigan shot very well overall (40/66 = 60.6%), they shot 3-pointers very well (15/29 = 51.7%), and they shot free throws very well (15/17 = 88.2%). They absolutely crushed PSU on the boards (44-21), but they lost the turnover battle (9-5). They won this game with great shooting, great rebounding, and ferocious defense. An interesting side note: Michigan out-rebounded PSU 24-4 in the first half.

The stats for the Ohio State game were good, but not as good as the PSU game. Michigan shot well overall (33/72 = 45.8%), they shot 3-pointers well (10/24 = 41.7%), and they shot free throws very well (6/7 = 85.7%). They dominated OSU on the boards (44-31), and they even won the turnover battle (8-12). They won this game with solid shooting and rebounding.

Who Started?

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

Who Looked Good?

Burnett was the star of the PSU game, with a career-high 31 points. He was "in the zone", shooting 11/16 overall, 7/10 from deep. When he wasn't making a 3-pointer, he was dunking on PSU. He was amazing! He had a decent game vs. OSU, with 8 points, but the big story was his explosion against PSU.

Mara thought "it's my turn for a career game" in the OSU game, so he did it. He scored a career-high 24 points, including those two 3-pointers mentioned above. He shot 11/16 overall, 2/3 from deep. He also hit double figures (11 points) vs. PSU.

[Trey McKenney](#) is proving more and more valuable every week. He's a strong candidate for the Big Ten "6th Man" award. He had 12 points in each game, and he played excellent defense when he was in there.

Johnson hit double figures in both games (12 and 11 points), and he had 8 and 12 rebounds, giving him a double-double vs. OSU.

Lendeborg had one good game (14 points vs. OSU) and one decent game (6 points vs. PSU). He contributed in other ways, such as 7 rebounds and 8 assists vs. PSU, and 14 rebounds vs. OSU, for another solid double-double.

[L.J. Cason](#) had a good week, with 12 and 8 points off the bench.

Cadeau didn't have a very good week with scoring (7 and 2 points), but he did have 8 and 6 assists. With all the other scoring threats around him, Michigan doesn't need him to score a lot every game, he can contribute by running the offense.

[Will Tschetter](#) chipped in 9 and 3 points off the bench.

Who Looked Not-So-Good?

[Roddy Gayle Jr.](#) had a tough week. He was ill and didn't play vs. PSU, and he went scoreless (0/6) vs. his old team, OSU. This may be the last time he gets to play against OSU, and you could tell that he wanted to have a big game in Columbus, but it didn't happen. Sigh.

Who Else Played?

[Oscar Goodman](#) got to play the most minutes of his career (10+) in the PSU blowout, and he took full advantage of it, scoring a career-high 6 points on 3/6 shooting.

[Malick Kordel](#) got to play 7 minutes in the PSU blowout, and he made 2 of 3 dunk attempts for 4 points.

[Howard Eisley Jr.](#) got in for the last minute of the PSU blowout, but never touched the ball.

Who Didn't Play?

The scholarship player who didn't play was [Winters Grady](#). Apparently, he has a serious foot injury, and he's probably out for the rest of the season, with a slim chance he might be back in mid-March.

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

What Does It Mean?

These were two very important wins. They kept Michigan in 1st place in the Big Ten, they kept Michigan as the #2 team in the AP Poll, and they kept Michigan in line for a #1 seed in the NCAA Tournament. At this point in the season, every win is crucial, and Michigan is humming along.

This Week

This week, Michigan plays 2 games. On Wednesday (02/11/2026, 8:30 p.m. EST, BTN), they play at Northwestern, then on Saturday (02/14/2026, 12:45 p.m., CBS), they play UCLA in Crisler Arena.

[Northwestern](#) is currently 10-14 (2-11 in Big Ten), with an impressive win at USC, and unimpressive losses to Virginia, Oklahoma State, Butler, Minnesota, Rutgers, and Iowa. They don't have any noteworthy players, but they do have some height: a 6'11" player and a 7-footer. This is a game that Michigan should win handily, but it can be tricky on the road in the Big Ten. Michigan needs to keep playing their "A" game.

[UCLA](#) is currently 17-7 (9-4 in Big Ten), with an impressive win over (#4) Purdue, and unimpressive losses to California, Iowa, Wisconsin, Ohio State, and Indiana. They don't have any noteworthy players, and they have some height: a 6'10" player and a 6'11" player. This could be a challenging game for Michigan. UCLA is a middle-of-the-pack Big Ten team this season, but they are still very dangerous.

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

Go Blue!