Nothing But 'Net – Week #05 – 11/02/2026 – The Calm Before The Storm

The (#16) University of Michigan men's basketball team didn't play any games this week. It was a rare week off, between the end of the 3-game exhibition season and the regular season. Since they have only played exhibition games, Michigan's record is still 0-0.

The Exhibition Schedule

The schedule is kind of weird this season. For many seasons, Michigan only played one exhibition game, usually against a hopelessly overmatched GLIAC team, in Crisler Arena, and usually very close to the start of the regular season. Last season, Michigan played two exhibition games, one in Ann Arbor and one in Madison Square Garden, against two quality opponents (Cincinnati and St. John's). This season, Michigan played three exhibition games, two of them in Crisler Arena and one of them in Grand Rapids. They won the two exhibition games in Ann Arbor, against a "cupcake" (Eastern Michigan) and a quality opponent (Oregon State). They lost the third exhibition game, against a ranked opponent (#10 Houston), and they looked mediocre doing it. They also had more than a week between the last exhibition game and the first regular season game, which is unusual.

The Regular Season

The regular season starts tonight with a home game against Oakland. Michigan has had plenty of opportunities to experiment with lineup combinations, and to see most of the players in action. They have a very challenging non-conference schedule, and the Big Ten looks as tough as ever.

The Players

Now that we've had a chance to see most of the players in actual game situations, we can start to get a feel for what to expect from them. My observations:

- After two seasons of having a dominant forecourt (Danny Wolf and Vlad Goldin in 2024-2025, and Aday Mara, Morez Johnson, Jr., and Yaxel Lendeborg in 2025-2026), this season's group is going to be a step back. Moustapha Thiam and J.P. Estrella are good, but not dominant. We don't know if Marcus Møller, Oscar Goodman, or Jalen Reed will be able to help. Møller hasn't played yet, and Goodman and Reed have been ineffective.

- Michigan has a nice collection of guards this season, led by Elliot Cadeau and Trey McKenney, but they aren't elite enough to carry the team when the forecourt is overpowered. The Houston exhibition game proved that. McKenney had a terrible shooting performance, and that doomed Michigan. When the guards are "on", Michigan should be able to stay with anyone, but if they're "off", things get a little tricky. The other guards (Roddy Gayle Jr., Kenny Noland, and Ricky Liburd) might be able to help. So far, Gayle has looked good in the one game he played in, Noland has been steady but unimpressive, and Liburd has been athletic but not productive.

- The freshmen all look like freshmen. Quinn Costello has shown some promise, but he's the exception. Malachi Brown played in the first two exhibition games, but didn't do much. Joseph Hartman looked good in the EMU exhibition game, but didn't do much in the Oregon State exhibition game.

- The two players on the Scout Team (Howard Eisley Jr. and Harrison Hochberg) haven't played yet, and don't figure to be a factor.

- Injuries have already been a problem, all involving freshmen. Michigan's highest rated incoming freshman (Brandon McCoy Jr.) suffered a season-ending knee injury during the European tour this summer. Another freshman (Lincoln Cosby) is still rehabbing from a knee injury of his own, and probably won't play at all this season. In addition, Møller missed all three exhibition games as he recovers from testicular cancer. It isn't clear

if/when he'll start to play. Finally, Hartman missed the Houston exhibition game with a shoulder injury, and might be out for a couple weeks.

This Week

This week, Michigan plays 2 games. On Monday (11/02/2026, 6:00 p.m., BTN), they play Oakland in Crisler Arena, then on Friday (11/06/2026, 8:00 p.m., TNT), they play (#4) Connecticut in TD Garden in Boston, MA.

Oakland was 16-16 (12-8 in Horizon League) last season. They lost in the 1st round of their conference tournament, and didn't play in any postseason tournament. They didn't have any impressive wins, and they had several unimpressive losses: Central Florida, Eastern Michigan, Northern Iowa, Wright State (twice), IU Indy, Cleveland State, Youngstown State, Robert Morris, Green Bay, Detroit Mercy, and Northern Kentucky. They don't have any noteworthy players, and they don't have much height: a 6'10" player and a 6'11" player. This is a game that Michigan should win handily. If they struggle to put Oakland away, the rest of the season looks a lot more iffy.

Connecticut was 34-6 (17-3 in Big East) last season. They lost to Michigan in the National Championship game. They were very good, and they're expected to be just as good this season. They don't have any noteworthy players, but they have plenty of height: two 6'11" players and a 7'0" player. This game is officially a "toss up", but given how Michigan has looked in their three exhibition games, it looks like UConn has the advantage. If Michigan can play a clean game, with low fouls and low turnovers, and above average shooting percentages, they might find a way to win it.

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

Go Blue!