Nothing But 'Net – Week #06 – 11/09/2026 – It's Going To Be A Long Season

The (#16) University of Michigan men's basketball team played two games this past week, and they won one and lost one. On Monday (11/02/2026), they beat Oakland 84-68 in Crisler Arena, then on Friday (11/06/2026), they lost to (#4) Connecticut 85-77 in TD Garden in Boston. Michigan's record is now 1-1.

What Happened?

Michigan did not look good in either game. Sure, they beat a lesser opponent (Oakland) handily at home, but they struggled to put them away. Against a superior opponent (UConn), they struggled just to keep from getting blown out. It's going to be a long season. Last season is just a (very) pleasant memory; this season's team is a mere shadow of last season's team. After two seasons of having a dominant forecourt, this team is completely helpless in the post. They will go as far as their 3-point shooting will take them. So far, they have not shot well from deep, and it cost them in the UConn game.

Game Flow

Last season, Michigan thrashed Oakland 121-78 to start the season, scoring a school-record 69 points in the 1st half. This season, Michigan struggled mightily to even get a 10-point lead in the 1st half. After a few lead changes early, Michigan pulled ahead for good, 19-18, at the 9:16 mark. They finally got the lead up to 10 points (29-19) with 6:22 left in the half, and managed to push it up to 11 points (47-36) at halftime. They led for the entire 2nd half, growing the lead as high as 16 points, but letting Oakland get within 6 points once. They finally got the game in hand, 65-55, at the 8:18 mark, and never let Oakland get any closer than that. Still, it was a pretty unimpressive win over a mid-major opponent at home.

Also last season, Michigan beat UConn 69-63 to end the season, winning the National Championship. This season, UConn was obviously the better team, beating Michigan in every aspect of the game. Michigan did lead once, 2-0, in the first 6 seconds, before UConn went ahead. Michigan managed to tie the score, 7-7, at the 15:56 mark, before UConn pulled away for good. UConn kept their lead in the 4-6 point range for most of the 1st half, with Michigan pulling to within 2 points (27-25) with 6:29 left. UConn promptly got their lead back to the 4-6 range again, and led by 6 points (36-30) at the 2:12 mark. That's when Michigan let the game start to slip away. The last 2:12 of the half were disastrous, with UConn pushing their lead to 13 points (43-30) at halftime. They led for the entire 2nd half, pushing their lead as high as 18 points (52-34) at the 16:22 mark, and keeping the lead in the 14-16 point range. They never let Michigan get any closer than 8 points, which was the final margin of victory.

Stats

The stats for the Oakland game were pretty bad:

- Overall shooting - 31/71 = 43.7% (Poor)
- 3-point shooting - 7/34 = 20.6% (Terrible)
- Free throws - 15/20 = 75.0% (Very good)
- Rebounds - Michigan lost 42-44
- Turnovers - Michigan won 9-15

Michigan won this game because Oakland shot even worse overall: 20/63 = 31.7%

The stats for the UConn game were even worse:

- Overall shooting - 26/63 = 41.3% (Poor)
- 3-point shooting - 7/28 = 25.0% (Terrible)
- Free throws - 18/23 = 78.3% (Very good)
- Rebounds - Michigan won 35-33
- Turnovers - Michigan lost 14-12

Michigan lost this game with miserable shooting.

Who Started?

The starters for the Oakland game were Elliot Cadeau, J.P. Estrella, Roddy Gayle Jr., Oscar Goodman, and Trey McKenney. Moustapha Thiam is the regular starter at center, but he was sick with the flu, so Estrella played center, and Goodman started at power forward. Michigan started their preferred starting lineup, with Thiam at center, in the UConn game.

Who Looked Good?

McKenney was the leading scorer for Michigan in both games, with 17 points vs. Oakland, and 22 points vs. UConn. He shot reasonably well in both games: 5/12 overall, 3/6 from deep, 4/4 from the line in the Oakland game, and 8/18 overall, 4/9 from deep, 2/2 from the line in the UConn game. The only downside: he was scoreless (0/7 overall, 0/3 from deep) in the crucial 1st half of the UConn game. By the time he got going, Michigan was in a deep enough hole that they couldn't dig their way out.

Gayle was tied with McKenney as the leading scorer for Michigan in the Oakland game, with 17 points, and he scored 18 points vs. UConn. He shot well in both games: 7/11 overall, 0/2 from deep, 3/4 from the line vs. Oakland, and 6/12 overall, 0/3 from deep, 6/6 from the line vs. UConn. The combined 0/5 from deep is a little troubling.

Estrella hit double figures in both games, with 15 and 19 points. He also had 12 and 9 rebounds, for a nice double-double in the Oakland game. He was solid out there.

Cadeau was quiet in both games, with 7 and 8 points. He did not shoot well in either game: 1/5 overall, 0/4 from deep, 5/6 from the line vs. Oakland, and 3/11 overall, 1/5 from deep, 1/3 from the line vs. UConn. More poor 3-point shooting: a combined 1/9.

Quinn Costello came off the bench, and had a good game vs. Oakland (13 points) and a mediocre game vs. UConn (3 points). He didn't shoot very well: 5/12 overall, 3/10 from deep in the Oakland game, and 1/5 overall, 1/5 from deep, 0/2 from the line in the UConn game.

Who Looked Not-So-Good?

Thiam didn't play in the Oakland game (flu), and he was almost worthless in the UConn game: 2 points on weak shooting: 1/3 overall. He got his one basket in the first 6 seconds of the game, then did nothing in the other 15 minutes. Perhaps he's still weakened by his bout with the flu?

Goodman chipped in 6 points in the game he started (Oakland), but was scoreless off the bench vs. UConn.

Ricky Liburd scored 0 and 5 points off the bench.

Kenny Noland scored 3 and 0 points off the bench.

Jalen Reed scored 6 and 0 points off the bench.

Who Else Played?

Marcus Møller played the last 32 seconds of the Oakland game, and missed his only shot attempt, an ollie-oop.

Who Didn't Play?

Joseph Hartman is injured (shoulder), and will be out for "at least 2 weeks".

Malachi Brown was the only healthy scholarship player who didn't play this week.

The two players on the Scout Team (Howard Eisley Jr. and Harrison Hochberg) didn't play this week.

What Does It Mean?

Let's face it: we got spoiled last season (and even the season before). We expected to be able to hang with any opponent, and stand a fighting chance in the last 2 minutes. That doesn't look to be the case this season. Michigan does not have the force underneath to hang with the big boys, like UConn, and they'll have to use perimeter play to try to stay close. When the 3-pointers aren't falling they will probably fall behind, and they don't have the depth to catch up.

It's still early in the season, and Michigan will have lots of opportunities to take on the elite teams on their schedule. They still have plenty of time to work things out, and they won't always have sub-par 3-point shooting, which will make the games look very different.

Still, this loss will not help their tournament resume in March. They need to beat a couple good teams in the non-conference schedule to show what they're capable of.

This Week

This week, Michigan plays 2 games. On Wednesday (11/11/2026, 7:00 p.m., FS1), they play Marquette, then on Sunday (11/15/2026, 2:00 p.m., B1G+), they play William & Mary. Both games are in Crisler Arena.

Marquette is currently 2-0, but they were 12-20 (7-13 in Big East) last season. They beat Xavier, Providence (twice), Creighton, Georgetown, and (#4) Connecticut, but they lost to Dayton, DePaul (twice), Seton Hall (twice), and Butler. They lost in the 1st round of the Big East tournament, and didn't play in a post-season tournament. They don't have any noteworthy players, but they do have some height: a 6'11" player and a 7'1" player. This is a game that Michigan is expected to win, but they need to play a lot better than they have so far in any of their exhibition or regular season games. They either need to have a hot night shooting from 3-point range, or they need to toughen up down low.

William & Mary is currently 1-0, but they were 20-12 (10-8 in CAA) last season. They didn't have any impressive wins, and they lost to Richmond, George Washington, Charleston, Monmouth, Drexel, Elon (twice), Campbell, and Hampton. They lost in the 2nd round of their conference tournament, and they didn't play in a post-season tournament. They don't have any noteworthy players, and they don't have much height: a 6'10" player. This is definitely a game that Michigan is supposed to win handily. If they struggle to pull away from a team like William & Mary, they are looking at a long season.

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

Go Blue!