Nothing But 'Net – Week #08 – 11/23/2026 – Reasons For Concern

The (#18) University of Michigan men's basketball team played one game this past week, and they lost it. On Saturday (11/21/2026), they lost at Villanova 79-73. Michigan's record is now 3-2.

What Happened?

Michigan did not look good in the Villanova game. In all three of Michigan's losses this season (two regular season games and one exhibition game), the same pattern has emerged: once a team gets a decent-sized lead (6-8 points) over Michigan in the last 5 minutes of the 1st half, Michigan does not have the ability to overcome that adversity and come back. It's been the same script in three games. It's a big reason for concern.

What's the problem? In all three losses, it's been poor shooting, too many dumb turnovers, and (the big one) foul trouble. All reasons for concern.

Game Flow

Michigan had a hot start, and actually led 6-0 in the first minute. Villanova tied it up (6-6) at the 17:23 mark, but Michigan went on an 8-0 run, and led 14-6 with 15:30 to go. That was the high-water mark for Michigan. Villanova went on their own 8-0 run to tie it up (14-14) at the 12:22 mark. The lead went back and forth for a while, with several ties and lead changes, but neither team was able to get more than 3 points ahead. Michigan had their last lead of the game (25-24) with 4:14 to go, then Villanova pulled away for good. They led by 5 at halftime (34-29), and they never looked back.

The 2nd half was all Villanova. They kept their lead in the 8-10 point range for most of the half, pushing it as high as 17 points (63-46) at the 9:56 mark. Michigan kept trying to fight back, and they did get as close as 4 points a couple times, including 77-73 with 0:27 left, but they couldn't "get over the hump" and catch them. This is not a team that is built for comebacks.

Stats

The game stats were pretty dismal:

- Overall shooting - 27/68 = 39.7% (Poor)
- 3-point shooting - 7/31 = 22.6% (Terrible)
- Free throws - 12/15 = 80.0% (Good)
- Rebounds - Michigan won 47-40
- Turnovers - Michigan lost 16-7

Michigan lost this game with poor shooting and too many turnovers.

Who Started?

The starters were Elliot Cadeau, J.P. Estrella, Roddy Gayle Jr., Trey McKenney, and Moustapha Thiam.

Who Looked Good?

McKenney was the high scorer for Michigan, with 22 points, on pretty good shooting: 7/17 overall, 5/12 from deep, 3/3 from the line. He also had 4 fouls, including 2 "Flagrant 1" calls.

Gayle was Michigan's 2nd leading scorer in this game, with 15 points. He also had 5 turnovers.

Cadeau was the only other Michigan player in double figures, with 11 points. Unfortunately, he was very inefficient shooting: 3/12 overall, 0/4 from deep, 5/8 from the line. He also had 5 turnovers, to go with 5 assists.

Estrella almost hit double figures, with 9 points. He committed 4 fouls, which limited his effectiveness.

Thiam had a mixed game. On the one hand, he had 7 points, 8 rebounds, and 4 blocked shots, including a made 3-pointer (finally). On the other hand, he shot poorly (2/7 overall, 1/3 from deep, 2/2 from the line), and committed 4 fouls.

Who Looked Not-So-Good?

Quinn Costello had a lousy game off the bench, with 5 points on poor shooting: 2/8 overall, 1/6 from deep.

Ricky Liburd had a quiet game off the bench, with 2 points in 10+ minutes.

Oscar Goodman had a quiet game off the bench, with 2 points in 11+ minutes.

Kenny Noland had a quiet game off the bench, with 0 points in 4+ minutes. He didn't attempt a shot.

That's all the bench scoring: 9 points. Michigan needs more.

Who Else Played?

No one else played.

Who Didn't Play?

Joseph Hartman is injured (shoulder) so he didn't play, but it sounds like he could return any day now.

Malachi Brown, Marcus Møller, and Jalen Reed were the scholarship players who didn't play.

Both players on the Scout Team (Howard Eisley Jr. and Harrison Hochberg) didn't play.

What Does It Mean?

This was a bad result for Michigan's postseason tournament resume. It was also a lost opportunity for a quality win. There are still a lot of games left to be played, and Michigan can certainly learn from this loss, but it still hurts.

This Week

This week, Michigan plays at least three games, in the Players Era 16 tournament in Las Vegas. On Tuesday (11/24/2026, 5:30 p.m. EST, ESPN), they play Creighton. If they win, then on Thursday (11/26/2026, 6:00 p.m. EST, ESPN), they play the winner of the TCU/Miami (FL) game (which is played on Tuesday). If they lose the Tuesday game, they play the loser of the TCU/Miami (FL) game on Thursday at 3:30 p.m. EST on ESPN2. If they win both games, they will on Friday (11/27/2026, 11:00 p.m. EST, ESPN) in the "bracket final", against the 2-game winner from the bottom of the bracket (Baylor, Alabama, Gonzaga, and Kansas State). If they win THAT game, they will play the "bracket winner" from the other bracket for the Players Era 16 championship on Saturday. If they lose either of the first two games, they will play some sort of consolation game on Friday, but not play on Saturday. See the full bracket for more information.

Creighton is currently 4-1, with solid wins over Iowa State and Minnesota, and a loss to Kansas State. They don't have any noteworthy players, but they have plenty of height: four players at 6'10", and a 7'2" player. This game is effectively a "toss up", with Michigan a slight favorite. Can Michigan beat Creighton? Sure, but they need to play their "A" game, and they need to try really hard to avoid falling behind.

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

Go Blue!