03/11/2000 – Wolverines Knocked Out of Big Ten Tournament in First Round

The University of Michigan Men's basketball team lost in the first round of the Big Ten Tournament on Thursday (03/09/2000) to Penn State, 76-66. The Wolverines managed to stay close right up to the very end, and were within 2 points late in the game, before fading down the stretch. The loss ends any chance UM had of sneaking into the NCAA Tournament. The Wolverines should still get into the NIT, but they'll need to play a lot better than they did vs. Penn State to last very long.

Poor shooting was the culprit in this one. UM shot 32% in the first half, and under 40% for the game. Other than Brandon Smith (3 for 4) and Peter Vignier (7 for 12), no one else had a good shooting day: LaVell Blanchard was 3 for 11, Gavin Groninger was 4 for 14, and Leon Jones was 3 for 8. On the positive side, Peter Vignier had the best game of his 4-year career at Michigan, with 16 points and 11 rebounds. The flip side of that is that Josh Asselin disappeared again, with 0 points.

NIT invitations will be announced on Sunday, and UM should get one. Given the mediocre attendance in Crisler Arena for all but a handful of home games this year, it's likely that the Wolverines will play on the road, where they've had a tough time this year. Hopefully, they'll be able to regroup and recapture some of the fire that carried them to a 9-2 record in the non-conference schedule to start the season.