

Nothing But 'Net – Week #19 (03/09/2009) – Still On The Bubble

The Week In Review

Two weeks ago (Sunday 02/22/2009), when the University of Michigan men's basketball team [lost at Iowa 70-60 in overtime](#), it looked like they had booted their last chance for going to [the NCAA Tournament](#) this season. At that point, they were 17-11 (7-8 in the Big Ten). Sure, they still had three regular season games left, but two of them were on the road against teams they seldom beat on the road (Wisconsin and Minnesota), and the remaining home game was against a Top-25 team (Purdue). Conventional wisdom said that the Wolverines had to win 2 of those 3 games to be considered for the Big Dance, since the selection committee usually doesn't look at teams that finish below 0.500 in their conference. When [Michigan beat Purdue last week \(Thursday 02/26/2009\) 87-78](#) in Crisler, they kept the NCAA dream alive, but they still had to close out the regular season with two games on the road. They played hard [at Wisconsin on Sunday 03/01/2009, but they still lost, 60-55](#). That put all the pressure on them to win [at Minnesota on Saturday \(03/07/2009\), and they came through, winning 67-64](#). The win gives Michigan a final regular-season record of 19-12 (9-9 in Big Ten play).

This was a huge win for Michigan, and it was a hard-fought game. Minnesota came into the game with a better overall (21-8) and Big Ten record (9-8), and they're fighting for a spot in the NCAA Tournament just like Michigan. They're very tough in their home arena (Williams Arena, a.k.a. "The Barn"), and it was Senior Day for them. (Note to [Coach Beilein](#): they started all their seniors; hint, hint). The game was close the whole way, but Michigan was playing from behind almost the whole game. Minnesota opened up a 12-point lead (51-39) with 13:20 left in the game, and things weren't looking good for the Wolverines. Then Michigan went on a 15-5 run to get back in the game, 56-54. The game was tied (60-60) with just under 5 minutes left, when Michigan went up for good. It got tense in the last minute, but Michigan hung on for an impressive win.

Game Statistics

First, let's look at the shooting [statistics from the Minnesota game](#):

Team	Field goals	3-Pointers	Free throws
Michigan	22-45 (48.9%)	9-22 (40.9%)	14-15 (93.3%)
Minnesota	22-40 (55.0%)	2-10 (20.0%)	18-19 (94.7%)
Advantage	Minnesota	Michigan	Minnesota

These are impressive stats for both teams, except for 3-point shooting for Minnesota, and that's where Michigan won the game. Michigan started out shooting very poorly from 3-point range, missing their first 6 attempts, which means that they went 9-for-16 (56.3%) from that point on. Awesome!

The free-throw shooting by both teams was also awesome. I've never seen a team shoot over 93% and have the other team shoot an even higher percentage.

Finally, let's look at the non-shooting [statistics from the Minnesota game](#):

Team	Rebounds	Assists	Turnovers	Blocks	Steals
Michigan	13	16	9	2	11
Minnesota	30	15	18	6	6
Advantage	Minnesota	Michigan	Michigan	Minnesota	Michigan

No, that's not a typo: Michigan really did win the game with only 13 rebounds, compared to 30 by Minnesota. Those 9 extra turnovers by Minnesota helped negate some of that imbalance, but still...

Season 3-Point Shooting

The way UM's offense is set up, they need to get off at least 20 3-pointers, and hit at least 40% of them to win. In the past, I counted a win where UM didn't hit 20/40 as "fits the theory", but no more. To fit my theory, they either have to hit 20/40 and win, or hit less than 20/40 and lose. If they win, but fail to hit 20/40, that doesn't fit my theory.

Here's how things have gone so far:

Date	Opponent	3-Point Shooting	Result	Fits Theory?
11/06/2008	Saginaw Valley State (exhibition)	11-24 (45.8%)	W	Y
11/11/2008	Michigan Tech	8-24 (33.3%)	W	N
11/12/2008	Northeastern	5-14 (35.7%)	W	N
11/20/2008	UCLA	5-20 (25.0%)	W	N
11/21/2008	Duke	6-22 (27.3%)	L	Y
11/25/2008	Norfolk State	9-27 (33.3%)	W	N
11/29/2008	Savannah State	4-22 (18.2%)	W	N
12/03/2008	Maryland	12-29 (41.4%)	L	N
12/06/2008	Duke	7-16 (43.8%)	W	N
12/13/2008	Eastern Michigan	16-33 (48.5%)	W	Y
12/20/2008	Oakland	13-29 (44.8%)	W	Y
12/22/2008	Florida Gulf Coast	12-42 (28.6%)	W	N
12/29/2008	North Carolina Central	9-30 (30.0%)	W	N
12/31/2008	Wisconsin	8-24 (33.3%)	L	Y
01/04/2009	Illinois	11-27 (40.7%)	W	Y
01/07/2009	Indiana	12-40 (30.0%)	W	N
01/11/2009	Iowa	7-22 (31.8%)	W	N
01/14/2009	Illinois	7-26 (26.9%)	L	Y
01/17/2009	Ohio State	10-29 (34.5%)	L	Y
01/20/2009	Penn State	5-30 (16.7%)	L	Y
01/24/2009	Northwestern	9-27 (33.3%)	W	N
01/28/2009	Ohio State	7-26 (26.9%)	L	Y
01/31/2009	Purdue	6-23 (26.1%)	L	Y
02/05/2009	Penn State	10-26 (38.5%)	W	N
02/07/2009	Connecticut	9-29 (31.0%)	L	Y
02/10/2009	Michigan State	4-24 (16.7%)	L	Y
02/15/2009	Northwestern	7-26 (26.9%)	W	N
02/19/2009	Minnesota	13-28 (46.4%)	W	Y
02/22/2009	Iowa	12-34 (35.3%)	L	Y
02/26/2009	Purdue	8-16 (50.0%)	W	N
03/01/2009	Wisconsin	6-21 (28.6%)	L	Y
03/07/2009	Minnesota	9-22 (40.9%)	W	Y
Totals		277-832 (33.3%)		17-15

The theory held this week. Michigan barely cleared the 20/40 mark, but they did, and they won the game.

Individual Statistics

[Coach Beilein](#) used his current favorite starting lineup for the Minnesota game. Here's how the starters did:

Player	Field Goals	3-Pointers	Free Throws	Points
Stu Douglass	1-3	1-3	2-2	5
Manny Harris	5-11	3-8	1-1	14
C.J. Lee	1-1	0-0	0-0	2
Zack Novak	1-6	1-5	0-0	3
DeShawn Sims	8-15	1-1	7-8	24
Totals	16-26 61.5%	6-17 35.3%	10-11 90.9%	48

As a group, the starters had a very good week. Their percentages were good, and they scored a reasonable number of points.

Individually, Harris and Sims were the only starters to hit double figures. Sims did a great job of keeping Michigan in the game in the 1st half, and pushing Michigan "over the hump" into the lead late in the game.

The other three starters didn't do much offensively.

Here's how the bench players did this week:

Player	Field Goals	3-Pointers	Free Throws	Points
Zack Gibson	0-1	0-0	0-0	0
Kelvin Grady	0-0	0-0	0-0	0
Laval Lucas-Perry	6-7	3-4	4-4	19
David Merritt	0-0	0-0	0-0	0
Jevohn Shepherd	0-0	0-0	0-0	0
Anthony Wright	0-1	0-1	0-0	0
Totals	6-9 66.7%	3-5 60.0%	4-4 100.0%	19

As a group, the bench players made a big contribution this week. Their shooting percentages were great, and they scored a nice number of points.

However, a quick glance at the individual statistics shows that "the bench" in this game was solely Lucas-Perry, who had a career-high 19 points. He was the hero in Michigan's big comeback in the 2nd half, with three 3-pointers in a row. Sims may have kept Michigan in the game, but LLP won it.

Big Ten Report

My weekly Big Ten Report is now a separate article, [here](#).

The Big Picture

The regular season is over, and Michigan did about what was expected of them. Before the Big Ten season started, [I predicted that UM would go 9-9](#), and that's what they did. Now, it's on to [the Big Ten Tournament](#). Michigan enters the tournament seeded #7, and they play their first game on Thursday (03/12/2009, 2:30 p.m. EDT, ESPN2) against the #10 seed, Iowa. [Michigan beat Iowa handily \(64-49\) in Ann Arbor on 01/11/2009](#), but [they lost a heartbreaker in Iowa City on 02/22/2009, 70-60 in overtime](#). They should be able to beat Iowa on a neutral court. If they do, they'll face the #2 seed, Illinois, at 6:30 p.m. EDT (Big

Ten Network) on Friday 03/13/2009. If Michigan can win their 1st round game, they stand a decent chance of making the NCAA Tournament, for the first time in over 10 years.

Here's the 2008-2009 schedule/results:

Date	Opponent	Site	Result	Score	Record
11/06/2008 (Thu)	Saginaw Valley State (exh)	Ann Arbor	W	81-55	0-0
<i>2K Sports Classic benefiting Coaches vs. Cancer</i>					
11/11/2008 (Tue)	Michigan Tech	Ann Arbor	W	77-55	1-0
11/12/2008 (Wed)	Northeastern	Ann Arbor	W	76-56	2-0
11/20/2008 (Thu)	UCLA	New York, NY	W	55-52	3-0
11/21/2008 (Fri)	Duke	New York, NY	L	71-56	3-1
11/25/2008 (Tue)	Norfolk State	Ann Arbor	W	83-49	4-1
11/29/2008 (Sat)	Savannah State	Ann Arbor	W	66-64 (ot)	5-1
<i>ACC/Big Ten Challenge</i>					
12/03/2008 (Wed)	at Maryland	College Park, MD	L	75-70	5-2
12/06/2008 (Sat)	Duke	Ann Arbor	W	81-73	6-2
12/13/2008 (Sat)	Eastern Michigan	Ann Arbor	W	91-60	7-2
12/20/2008 (Sat)	vs. Oakland	Auburn Hills, MI	W	89-76	8-2
12/22/2008 (Mon)	Florida Gulf Coast	Ann Arbor	W	76-59	9-2
12/29/2008 (Mon)	North Carolina Central	Ann Arbor	W	77-57	10-2
12/31/2009 (Wed)	Wisconsin	Ann Arbor	L	73-61	10-3 (0-1)
01/04/2009 (Sun)	Illinois	Ann Arbor	W	74-64	11-3 (1-1)
01/07/2009 (Wed)	at Indiana	Bloomington, IN	W	72-66 (ot)	12-3 (2-1)
01/11/2009 (Sun)	Iowa	Ann Arbor	W	64-49	13-3 (3-1)
01/14/2009 (Wed)	at Illinois	Champaign, IL	L	66-51	13-4 (3-2)
01/17/2009 (Sat)	Ohio State	Ann Arbor	L	65-58	13-5 (3-3)
01/20/2009 (Tue)	at Penn State	State College, PA	L	73-58	13-6 (3-4)
01/24/2009 (Sat)	Northwestern	Ann Arbor	W	68-59	14-6 (4-4)
01/28/2009 (Wed)	at Ohio State	Columbus, OH	L	72-54	14-7 (4-5)
01/31/2009 (Sat)	at Purdue	West Lafayette, IN	L	67-49	14-8 (4-6)
02/05/2009 (Thu)	Penn State	Ann Arbor	W	71-51	15-8 (5-6)
02/07/2009 (Sat)	at Connecticut	Storrs, CT	L	69-61	15-9 (5-6)
02/10/2009 (Tue)	Michigan State	Ann Arbor	L	54-42	15-10 (5-7)
02/15/2009 (Sun)	at Northwestern	Evanston, IL	W	70-67 (ot)	16-10 (6-7)
02/19/2009 (Thu)	Minnesota	Ann Arbor	W	74-62	17-10 (7-7)
02/22/2009 (Sun)	at Iowa	Iowa City, IA	L	70-60 (ot)	17-11 (7-8)
02/26/2009 (Thu)	Purdue	Ann Arbor	W	87-78	18-11 (8-8)
03/01/2009 (Sun)	at Wisconsin	Madison, WI	L	60-55	18-12 (8-9)
03/07/2009 (Sat)	at Minnesota	Minneapolis, MN	W	67-64	19-12 (9-9)
<i>Big Ten Tournament</i>					
03/12/2009 (Thu)	Iowa (1 st round)	Indianapolis, IN			
03/13/2009 (Fri)	Quarterfinal	Indianapolis, IN			
03/14/2009 (Sat)	Semifinal	Indianapolis, IN			
03/15/2009 (Sun)	Championship	Indianapolis, IN			

The Upcoming Week

This week, Michigan plays in the Big Ten Tournament in Indianapolis. They'll play until they lose, or win it all. All the games will be on TV, so check the [tournament site](#) for more details, then check back here next week to see what happened, and why.

Go Blue!