

Nothing But 'Net – Week #20 (03/16/2009) – Going To The Big Dance!

The Week In Review

I've been writing this column for 9 years, 3 months, and 12 days, and in all that time the University of Michigan men's basketball team has never made it to the [NCAA Tournament](#). The wait is finally over: [Michigan is going to the Big Dance!](#) This is a huge step for this program. [They held a party in Crisler Arena to watch the selection show](#), and they found out that they're the #10 seed in the South Regional, and they play the #7 seed, [Clemson](#), on Thursday in Kansas City, MO. More about that below. First, let's take a look at how they got there.

Michigan played in the [Big Ten Tournament](#) this week. [They beat Iowa 73-45 in the 1st round on Thursday \(03/12/2009\)](#), then [they lost to Illinois 60-50 in the next \(quarterfinal\) round on Friday \(03/13/2009\)](#). The win and the loss leave Michigan with a record of 20-13 (9-9 in Big Ten play). The 20 wins probably put Michigan "over the hump", and into the NCAA Tournament, so the win over Iowa was really big.

The Iowa game was probably the best game Michigan played this season against a Big Ten opponent. UM dominated Iowa, and they won easily. They were up by 21 (40-19) at halftime, and kept the lead up over 20 for the last 16 minutes of the game.

Michigan played a decent 1st half against Illinois, and had a 4 point lead (24-20) with 5 minutes left in the half. Unfortunately, they didn't score again until a minute into the 2nd half, and by then they were down 27-24. That pulled them back within a point, but then the roof fell in. Illinois went on an 8-0 run to push the lead up to 9 points (35-26), and the Wolverines got a little rattled. They started firing up poor shots, and they turned the ball over too often, and that allowed Illinois to go on another 10-0 run to put the game out of reach, 50-31. Michigan regained some composure, and they rallied to get within 7 points (54-47) with 3:33 left, but they couldn't get any closer. Illinois hung on to win by 10.

Game Statistics

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

Team	Field goals	3-Pointers	Free throws
Michigan	29-49 (59.2%)	10-22 (45.5%)	5-5 (100.0%)
Iowa	15-45 (33.3%)	4-17 (23.5%)	11-14 (78.6%)
Advantage	Michigan	Michigan	Michigan

Michigan dominated these stats, which is why they won so handily.

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

Team	Rebounds	Assists	Turnovers	Blocks	Steals
Michigan	23	22	11	3	9
Iowa	28	8	17	1	5
Advantage	Iowa	Michigan	Michigan	Michigan	Michigan

It still amazes me how often Michigan wins a game while getting out-rebounded.

By the way, check out the number of assists Michigan had: 22 assists on 29 field goals. That's excellent unselfish play.

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

Team	Field goals	3-Pointers	Free throws
Michigan	19-57 (33.3%)	9-29 (31.0%)	3-5 (60.0%)
Illinois	23-50 (46.0%)	4-13 (30.8%)	10-12 (83.3%)
Advantage	Illinois	Michigan	Illinois

Illinois shot much better than Michigan did, and that's why they won the game. They scored 7 more points from the free-throw line, and they won by 10.

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

Team	Rebounds	Assists	Turnovers	Blocks	Steals
Michigan	30	12	10	2	3
Illinois	38	15	10	5	6
Advantage	Illinois	Illinois	Even	Illinois	Illinois

Other than rebounds, these stats are too close to matter much. It was shooting that won the game for Illinois.

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

Date	Opponent	3-Point Shooting	Result	Fits Theory?
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
03/12/2009	Iowa	10-22 (45.5%)	W	Y
03/13/2009	Illinois	9-29 (31.0%)	L	Y
Totals		296-883 (33.5%)		19-15

This week was a textbook example of the theory in action. When Michigan shot at least 20/40, they won. When they shot less than 20/40, they lost.

Individual Statistics

[Coach Beilein](#) used his favorite starting lineup for both games this week. Here's how the starters did:

Player	Field Goals		3-Pointers		Free Throws		Points	
	Iowa	Ill	Iowa	Ill	Iowa	Ill	Iowa	Ill
Stu Douglass	3-6	2-8	2-4	2-7	0-0	0-0	8	6
Manny Harris	7-11	3-11	3-5	1-5	1-1	2-3	18	9
C.J. Lee	1-2	1-3	0-1	1-2	0-0	0-0	2	3
Zack Novak	1-2	4-8	1-2	2-6	0-0	0-0	3	10
DeShawn Sims	12-16	6-19	1-2	2-5	2-2	1-2	27	15
Totals	24-37 64.9%	16-49 32.7%	7-14 50.0%	8-25 32.0%	3-3 100.0%	3-5 60.0%	58	43

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

Individually, Sims was the only starter to hit double figures in both games, although Harris got close. Sims had a great game (only 2 short of his career high) in the Iowa game, and a good game against Illinois. Harris had a good game in the Iowa game, but a sub-par game against Illinois. Novak hit double figures in the Illinois game, but he wasn't much of a factor in the Iowa game. The other starters didn't do much offensively.

Here's how the bench players did this week:

Player	Field Goals		3-Pointers		Free Throws		Points	
	Iowa	Ill	Iowa	Ill	Iowa	Ill	Iowa	Ill
Zack Gibson	2-5	2-3	0-1	0-0	0-0	0-0	4	4
Kelvin Grady	0-0	DNP	0-0	DNP	0-0	DNP	0	DNP
Laval Lucas-Perry	2-4	0-2	2-4	0-1	0-0	0-0	6	0
David Merritt	1-2	1-2	1-2	1-2	2-2	0-0	5	3
Eric Puls	0-1	DNP	0-1	DNP	0-0	DNP	0	DNP
Jevohn Shepherd	0-0	0-0	0-0	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0
Anthony Wright	0-0	0-1	0-0	0-1	0-0	0-0	0	0

Totals	5-12 41.7%	3-8 37.5%	3-8 37.5%	1-4 25.0%	2-2 100.0%	0-0 0.0%	15	7
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As a group, the bench players didn't make much of a contribution this week. Their shooting percentages were decent, except for 3-pointers in the Illinois game, but they didn't score enough points.

Individually, none of the bench players contributed much offensively.

Big Ten Report

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

The Big Picture

Of course, the big news is that Michigan is going to the Big Dance, finally. The last time they went was the 1997-1998 season, which was vacated due to the whole forgettable Ed Martin scandal, so the last "official" time they went was the season before, 1996-1997. It's been too long. They've gotten close several times in the last few seasons, but not quite close enough.

Here's the [entire NCAA Tournament bracket](#).

As I mentioned above, Michigan is a #10 seed in the South Regional. A #10 seed is very fair, considering Michigan's overall record, and the matchup with the #7 seed, Clemson, is a good one.

As we've seen all season, if Michigan plays their "A" game, they can beat anyone, and if they let down their guard, even for just a couple minutes, they can lose control of the game and make it very hard to win. That's been the key in all of Michigan's big wins, and even their couple of near-misses ([at Maryland](#), [at Connecticut](#), and [at Wisconsin](#)). When they control the tempo of the game, play solid defense, run the offense, and cut down on silly mistakes, they can stay in any game, and hope to come out on top at the end.

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)

Date	Opponent	Site	Result	Score	Record
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)
Big Ten Tournament					
03/12/2009 (Thu)	Iowa (1 st round)	Indianapolis, IN	W	73-45	20-12 (9-9)
03/13/2009 (Fri)	Illinois (Quarterfinal)	Indianapolis, IN	L	60-50	20-13 (9-9)
NCAA Tournament					
03/19/2009 (Thu)	Clemson (1 st round)	Kansas City, MO			
03/21/2009 (Sat)	2 nd round	Kansas City, MO			

The Upcoming Week

This week, Michigan plays in the South Regional of the NCAA Tournament in Kansas City. They play Clemson on Thursday (03/19/2009, 7:10 p.m. EDT, CBS), and if they win, they'll play the winner of the game between the #2 seed Oklahoma and the #15 seed Morgan State on Saturday (03/21/2009, time TBA, CBS).

Check back here next week to see what happened, and why.

Go Blue!