

Nothing But 'Net – Week #23 (03/22/2010) – Final Wrap-Up & Grades

Season Wrap-up

The 2009-2010 season is over for the University of Michigan men's basketball team, and it was pretty disappointing. Last season, Michigan went 21-14, made it to the [NCAA Tournament](#), and even [won a game in the tournament](#). Since they only lost a couple role players to graduation, expectations were high, and Michigan started the season ranked #15. They won their only exhibition game and the first 3 games of the regular season, all against lesser opponents. The last of those 3 games was the opener in the [Old Spice Classic](#) in Orlando (FL), where UM lost the next 2 games. That was our first clue that Michigan was not as good as expected. In fact, the Wolverines finished 15-17, and didn't even make it to the [National Invitational Tournament \(NIT\)](#). They never won more than 2 games in a row the rest of the season, and they had three separate 3-game losing streaks mixed in.

So, what happened? How could such a promising season turn out so poorly? It sure appears that those "unimportant" departed role players were more important than most people thought. They provided leadership and stability that was lacking this season. There were too many crucial situations when the game was in the balance and Michigan looked scared and flustered. This didn't happen last season.

There was one other problem that cropped up way too often this season, but it seems so fundamental that I hesitate to mention it: Michigan just flat-out shot poorly, especially from 3-point range. You can break down individual players, and talk about offensive and defensive strategies and schemes, but in the final analysis the team that puts the ball in the basket more often wins the game, and Michigan had games where they couldn't have thrown the basketball into Lake Michigan. In some of those games, they had a tough time getting an open look, due to ferocious defense by their opponents, but they also shot terribly in games where they had many good open looks at the basket. They just missed way too many wide-open shots, from 3-pointers to layups.

There's one more problem that I hesitate to bring up, and some might disagree with me, but I feel that there were some games where [Manny Harris](#) hurt Michigan more than he helped. Don't get me wrong: he's a very good player, he gives a great effort out there, and I like watching him play, but sometimes he tried to do too much by himself. As fans, we shake our heads and say "Manny being Manny", and when it works, we smile. When he tries to dribble into a double- or triple-team and loses the ball, we grimace. I'm not saying that he shouldn't do it, I'm saying that he needs to trust his teammates more and run the offense more. Save the heroics for "do or die" situations.

When I look at a season, I like to divide the games into 3 categories: games Michigan should win, games Michigan probably doesn't stand much chance of winning, and "toss up" games. In a successful season, Michigan would win all the "should win" games, some of the "toss up" games, and maybe one or two of the "should lose" games. Here's how this season's games were divided up in my mind:

"Should win" games (17): Northern Michigan, Houston Baptist, Creighton, 2nd round Old Spice Classic opponent (Marquette or Xavier), Arkansas – Pine Bluff, Detroit-Mercy, Coppin State, Indiana (home and away), Iowa (home and away), Minnesota (home and away), Northwestern (home and away), and Penn State (home and away).

"Should lose" games (4): Kansas, Wisconsin (away), Purdue (away), and Michigan State (away).

"Toss up" games (9): Final round game in Old Spice Classic, Boston College, Utah, Ohio State (home), Connecticut, Michigan State (home), Wisconsin (home), Illinois, and Ohio State (away).

So, if Michigan had won all 17 of their "should win" games, and more than half (5 out of 9) of their "toss up" games, that would have worked out to a record of 22-8. However, it didn't work out that way. Here's what really happened:

- "Should Win" games (12-5). They lost to some pretty lousy teams: Indiana (away), Northwestern (away and home!), and Penn State (home).
- "Should Lose" games (0-4). They played pretty well in three of these games (not at MSU), but couldn't come up with a win in any of them.
- "Toss Up" games (2-7). Their two biggest wins this season were against Ohio State (home) and Connecticut. They lost the rest of the "toss up" games.

As you can see, there were two problems: losing five "should win" games, and only winning two of the nine "toss up" games. That's eight losses that could have been wins.

Here are the final 2009-2010 results:

Date	Opponent	Site	Result	Score	Record
11/06/2009 (Fri)	Wayne State (exh)	Ann Arbor	W	73-54	0-0
11/14/2009 (Sat)	Northern Michigan	Ann Arbor	W	97-50	1-0
11/20/2009 (Fri)	Houston Baptist	Ann Arbor	W	77-55	2-0
Old Spice Classic					
11/26/2009 (Thu)	vs. Creighton	Orlando, FL	W	83-76 (ot)	3-0
11/27/2009 (Fri)	vs. Marquette	Orlando, FL	L	79-65	3-1
11/29/2009 (Sun)	vs. Alabama	Orlando, FL	L	68-66	3-2
ACC/Big Ten Challenge					
12/02/2009 (Wed)	Boston College	Ann Arbor	L	62-58	3-3
12/05/2009 (Sat)	Arkansas – Pine Bluff	Ann Arbor	W	67-53	4-3
12/09/2009 (Wed)	at Utah	Salt Lake City, UT	L	68-52	4-4
12/13/2009 (Sun)	Detroit – Mercy	Ann Arbor	W	75-64	5-4
12/19/2009 (Sat)	at Kansas	Lawrence, KS	L	75-64	5-5
12/22/2009 (Tue)	Coppin State	Ann Arbor	W	76-46	6-5
12/31/2009 (Thu)	at Indiana	Bloomington, IN	L	71-65	6-6 (0-1)
01/03/2010 (Sun)	Ohio State	Ann Arbor	W	73-64	7-6 (1-1)
01/07/2010 (Thu)	at Penn State	State College, PA	W	64-55	8-6 (2-1)
01/10/2010 (Sun)	Northwestern	Ann Arbor	L	68-62	8-7 (2-2)
01/14/2010 (Thu)	Indiana	Ann Arbor	W	69-45	9-7 (3-2)
01/17/2010 (Sun)	Connecticut	Ann Arbor	W	68-63	10-7 (3-2)
01/20/2010 (Wed)	at Wisconsin	Madison, WI	L	54-48	10-8 (3-3)
01/23/2010 (Sat)	at Purdue	West Lafayette, IN	L	69-59	10-9 (3-4)
01/26/2010 (Tue)	Michigan State	Ann Arbor	L	57-56	10-10 (3-5)
01/30/2010 (Sat)	Iowa	Ann Arbor	W	60-46	11-10 (4-5)
02/02/2010 (Tue)	at Northwestern	Evanston, IL	L	67-52	11-11 (4-6)
02/06/2010 (Sat)	Wisconsin	Ann Arbor	L	62-44	11-12 (4-7)
02/11/2010 (Thu)	at Minnesota	Minneapolis, MN	W	71-63	12-12 (5-7)
02/16/2010 (Tue)	at Iowa	Iowa City, IA	W	80-78 (ot)	13-12 (6-7)
02/20/2010 (Sat)	Penn State	Ann Arbor	L	55-51	13-13 (6-8)
02/23/2010 (Tue)	Illinois	Ann Arbor	L	51-44	13-14 (6-9)
02/27/2010 (Sat)	at Ohio State	Columbus, OH	L	66-55	13-15 (6-10)

03/02/2010 (Tue)	Minnesota	Ann Arbor	W	83-55	14-15 (7-10)
03/07/2010 (Sun)	at Michigan State	East Lansing, MI	L	64-48	14-16 (7-11)
Big Ten Tournament					
03/11/2010 (Thu)	vs. Iowa (First Round)	Indianapolis, IN	W	59-52	15-16 (7-11)
03/12/2010 (Fri)	vs. Ohio State (Quarterfinal)	Indianapolis, IN	L	69-68	15-17 (7-11)

Good/Bad Wins/Losses

Not all wins are good wins, and not all losses are bad losses. Sure, a win is a win, and a loss is a loss, but some wins can be discouraging, and some losses can be encouraging. I know, Michigan doesn't believe in "moral victories" in any of their sports, but I do. Therefore, I've gone back over the season, and found the good and bad wins, and the good and bad losses:

Good wins

Date	Opponent	Location	Score	Comments
01/03/2010	(#15) Ohio State	Ann Arbor	73-64	This was when we all found out how valuable Evan Turner is to Ohio State. He missed this game, due to injury, and UM won handily.
01/17/2010	(#15) Connecticut	Ann Arbor	68-63	This was the beginning of a slide for Connecticut that sent them to the NIT. At the time, it was a big win.
03/02/2010	Minnesota	Ann Arbor	83-55	It was nice to win handily on Senior Night. At the time, Minnesota didn't look like an NCAA Tournament team.
03/11/2010	Iowa	Indianapolis, IN	59-52	This was a big win because it came in the Big Ten Tournament. Winning a tournament game, any tournament game, is a big deal.

Good losses

Date	Opponent	Location	Score	Comments
12/19/2009	(#1) Kansas	Lawrence, KS	75-64	Michigan hung in for most of the game.
01/20/2010	(#18) Wisconsin	Madison, WI	54-48	Michigan led for the first 36 minutes, and lost the game down the stretch.
01/26/2010	(#5) Michigan State	Ann Arbor	57-56	Michigan missed a game-winning layup at the buzzer.
03/12/2010	(#5) Ohio State	Indianapolis, IN	69-68	Evan Turner of OSU made a 37-footer at the buzzer to win.

Bad wins

None.

Bad losses

Date	Opponent	Location	Score	Comments
11/27/2009	Marquette	Orlando, FL	79-65	This was Michigan's first loss, and they looked terrible. It turns out that Marquette was better than expected, but still...

11/29/2009	Alabama	Orlando, FL	68-66	Michigan had a chance to salvage a second win at the Old Spice Classic, and they led for most of the game, before losing in the last 5 seconds.
12/02/2009	Boston College	Ann Arbor	62-58	Michigan was never really in this one, despite the final score.
12/09/2009	Utah	Salt Lake City, UT	68-52	I know: it's tough to win on the road, but Michigan didn't even put up a fight.
12/31/2009	Indiana	Bloomington, IN	71-65	Another road loss, but to a truly lousy team.
01/10/2010	Northwestern	Ann Arbor	68-62	Yeah, this was arguably the best Northwestern team ever, but they got 2 of their wins vs. Michigan. This was a pathetic performance by Michigan.
02/02/2010	Northwestern	Evanston, IL	67-52	Michigan should never get swept by Northwestern. This loss was a huge embarrassment.
02/06/2010	(#16) Wisconsin	Ann Arbor	62-44	Wisconsin totally overpowered Michigan.
02/20/2010	Penn State	Ann Arbor	55-51	This could be the most embarrassing loss I've ever seen in person. Penn State was terrible this season.

Sure, there were 4 "good wins" and 4 "good losses", but there were 9 "bad losses", and some of those "bad losses" were among the worst I've seen in 36 seasons of following Michigan basketball.

Season Statistics

[The Athletic Department publishes complete statistics after every game](#), and they're very thorough and complete. They're also a bit much to digest. Here are the "stats lite" for this season.

First, let's look at the team shooting statistics for the season:

Team	Field goals	3-Pointers	Free throws
Michigan	732-1758 (41.6%)	227-760 (29.9%)	368-509 (72.3%)
Opponents	752-1698 (44.3%)	177-553 (32.0%)	289-428 (67.5%)
Advantage	Opponents	Opponents	Michigan

These stats show why Michigan had such a disappointing season: they shot worse than their opponents, except for free throws. The numbers for Michigan are all down significantly from last season, across the board.

Next, let's check out the team non-shooting statistics for the season:

Team	Rebounds	Assists	Turnovers	Blocks	Steals
Michigan	990	456	326	68	223
Opponents	1113	430	452	97	165
Advantage	Opp	Mich	Mich	Opp	Mich

Once again, Michigan was out-rebounded by a wide margin (-123). Of course, the turnovers (+126) and steals (+58) more than make up for it.

Now, let's look at the individual shooting stats for the season:

Player	Field Goals	3-Pointers	Free Throws	Points	
				Total	Per Game
Eso Akunne	2-3 (0.667)	0-0 (0.000)	1-1 (1.000)	5	0.7
Josh Bartelstein	0-4 (0.500)	0-3 (0.000)	0-0 (0.000)	0	0.0
Ben Cronin	1-3 (0.333)	0-0 (0.000)	1-4 (0.250)	3	0.6
Stu Douglass	72-216 (0.333)	52-158 (0.329)	21-27 (0.778)	217	6.8
Zack Gibson	44-76 (0.579)	5-18 (0.278)	33-42 (0.786)	126	3.9
Manny Harris	181-430 (0.421)	48-156 (0.308)	152-190 (0.800)	562	18.1
Laval Lucas-Perry	50-144 (0.347)	50-144 (0.291)	25-39 (0.641)	155	4.8
Darius Morris	52-128 (0.406)	7-39 (0.179)	29-46 (0.630)	140	4.4
Zack Novak	79-211 (0.374)	44-144 (0.306)	26-38 (0.684)	228	7.4
Corey Person	0-0 (0.000)	0-0 (0.000)	1-2 (0.500)	1	0.1
Eric Puls	0-2 (0.000)	0-1 (0.000)	0-0 (0.000)	0	0.0
DeShawn Sims	220-447 (0.492)	21-74 (0.284)	75-112 (0.670)	536	16.8
Matt Vogrich	17-42 (0.405)	11-28 (0.393)	1-3 (0.333)	46	1.5
Anthony Wright	14-52 (0.269)	14-52 (0.250)	3-5 (0.600)	40	1.4

On the one hand, a lot of players played this season, but there were also quite a few (Akunne, Bartelstein, Cronin, Person, Puls, and Vogrich) who didn't play much. Of that bunch, several had shortened seasons:

- Akunne (7 games) - Academically ineligible for the winter term.
- Cronin (5 games) - His injured hip never really healed, and he gave up on playing again this season, and maybe ever again.
- Puls (2 games) - Left the team to concentrate on his studies.

Looking at the regulars, only four of them shot over 40%. The biggest problem here is that Michigan really only had two reliable scorers (Harris and Sims).

In the Beilein system, everyone needs to be able to shoot 3-pointers, and no one shot 40% this season. That's the #1 reason that Michigan finished below 0.500 this season.

Finally, let's check out the individual non-shooting stats for the season:

Player	Rebounds	Assists	Turnovers	Blocks	Steals
Eso Akunne	6	1	2	1	1
Josh Bartelstein	0	0	1	0	0
Ben Cronin	5	0	2	1	0
Stu Douglass	70	79	35	0	35
Zack Gibson	68	8	16	17	15
Manny Harris	187	126	88	11	56
Laval Lucas-Perry	75	53	30	1	19
Darius Morris	58	84	51	5	20
Zack Novak	132	50	23	8	30
Corey Person	2	2	0	0	0
Eric Puls	1	0	0	0	0

DeShawn Sims	242	30	48	21	35
Matt Vogrich	19	8	9	0	8
Anthony Wright	31	15	15	3	4

There are a few interesting stats here:

- Looking at assists/turnovers for the 3 players who played point guard, Douglass had the best ratio ($79/35 = 2.3$). LLP ($53/30 = 1.8$) and Morris ($84/51 = 1.6$) were OK. Harris didn't play point much, but his ratio was pretty good: $126/88 = 1.4$. Novak never played point guard, but his ratio was almost as good as Douglass': $50/23 = 2.2$.
- Speaking of Novak, check out his rebounds (3rd on the team) and steals (4th). Very versatile.
- Other than assists, Gibson had pretty good numbers for the number of minutes he averaged (10/game).

Team Honors

Regardless of the awards announced at the Basketball Bust, here are my awards for this year's team:

Most Valuable Player: DeShawn Sims

Best Defensive Player: Stu Douglass

Most Hustle: Zack Novak

Most Improved: <None> No one improved from last season, and several players regressed.

Final Grades

It's time for final grades for the team, and Coach Beilein. I broke this season up into 3 parts, roughly corresponding to the non-conference schedule and the two halves of the Big Ten schedule. Here are the grades:

Name	Grades			Comments
	1st Tri.	2nd Tri.	Final	
Freshmen				
Eso Akunne	C	F	F	Eso was academically ineligible for the winter term, but when he was eligible he played more than anyone expected, and he did pretty well out there. He'll be back next year.
Josh Bartelstein	Inc.	Inc.	Inc.	Josh only played 13 minutes in 5 games this season, so he gets an "incomplete".
Ben Cronin	C-	F		Ben never fully recovered from his hip surgery, and he left the team for medical reasons. He left open the possibility that he could return some time in the future, but it's not likely.
Blake McLimans	Inc.	Inc.	Inc.	Blake voluntarily redshirted this season.
Jordan Morgan	Inc.	Inc.	Inc.	Jordan took a medical redshirt year this season.

Darius Morris	C+	C	C	Darius started the first 9 games of the season, and he did OK out there, but not great. He ran the floor pretty well, and he made reasonable, but not inspired, decisions at point guard. Along with the rest of the team, his shots just didn't fall. He learned and progressed, just not as quickly as we had hoped.
Corey Person	Inc.	Inc.	Inc.	Corey only played 13 minutes in 7 games this season, so he gets an "incomplete".
Matt Vogrich	C	D+	D+	Matt had a great first game, vs. Northern Michigan, when he went 5-for-5 from 3-point range. The rest of the season, he didn't do much. He often looked lost out there, and his minutes dropped as the season went on. Hopefully, he'll get a fresh start next season.
Sophomores				
Stu Douglass	B-	B-	B	Stu had some good games, and some forgettable games. He played better since he took over the starting point guard position from Darius Morris. We know that he's got a great 3-point shot, he just needs to get a little more consistent. He's a very good defender.
Laval Lucas-Perry	B	B-	B-	Laval had a decent season. His 3-point shooting was a little off from last year, but he did a decent job when he took a turn at point guard.
Zack Novak	B+	B	B+	Even though Manny Harris and DeShawn Sims did most of the scoring and rebounding, Zack might just be the most valuable player on the team. He's certainly the most versatile player on the team, he hustles the whole time he's on the floor, and he plays bigger than his actual size. His shooting was off this season, but he still contributed any way he could.
Juniors				
Manny Harris	A	A-	A-	Manny had a pretty good season. He shot pretty well, he drove the lane, he rebounded well, and he played good defense. He just needs to work on his decision-making a little.
Anthony Wright	C-	D+	D+	Anthony didn't contribute much this season. His shots stopped falling, and because of it, his minutes dropped off. Even though he has junior eligibility, he has elected to not return for his 5 th year.
Seniors				
Zack Gibson	B-	C	B-	Zack started the season strong, tailed off a little during the 1 st half of the Big Ten season, then picked it up a little down the stretch. He played hard when he was out there.

DeShawn Sims	B+	A-	A-	DeShawn did a great job as a power forward playing center in a league full of true centers. He did his best in there banging with the big boys, despite giving away 2-4 inches every game.
Coach				
John Beilein	C+	C+	C	The Beilein System works. Unfortunately, it depends heavily on good 3-point shooting, and this season's team was lousy from 3-point range most of the time. Coach needs to adapt and get the team into higher percentage (2-point) shots when the 3-point shooting is off.

As you can see, the grades were pretty consistent, and not very good, all season long.

Looking Ahead

Season #1: 10-22. Ugh.

Season #2: 21-14. Much better.

Season #3: 15-17. More ugh.

We'll take more of that Season #2 stuff, please. We know that the Beilein System works, and we now know how much it depends on good 3-point shooting. The conclusion is obvious: recruit and develop more good 3-point shooters. A little height would help too.

Michigan is losing at least 3 players from this season's team: Sims, Gibson, and Wright. Harris is still deciding whether or not to leave early for the NBA. Frankly, after what he showed us this season, I'm not sure he's ready for the NBA, but that's his call. Of the 3 players definitely leaving, we'll certainly miss Sims the most. He and Gibson were the only "big" men on the team this season, and they weren't that big.

The Wolverines are returning a solid group of players, including (maybe) one senior (Harris), 3 juniors (Douglass, Lucas-Perry, and Novak), 5 sophomores (Akunne, Bartelstein, Morris, Person, and Vogrich), and 5 freshmen (Dumars, Hardaway, McLimans, Morgan, and Smotrycz). The 5 freshmen include [one transfer \(Dumars\)](#), two redshirts (McLimans and Morgan), and [two new recruits \(Hardaway and Smotrycz\)](#).

Here's a quick look at the incoming freshman class:

[Jordan Dumars](#)

6'5", 225 pounds, Small Forward
Detroit, MI

Jordan transferred to Michigan from South Florida (USF), where he played for the 1st semester. So, he needs to wait until the 2nd semester (January 2011) next season before he is eligible to play. Yes, he is the son of "that" Dumars (Joe), the former Detroit Pistons star (one of the "Bad Boys"), and current President of Basketball Operations for the Pistons.

Jordan played at Detroit Country Day, and shot 36% from 3-point range (not bad) and 96% from the free-throw line (outstanding). He's been practicing with the team since early January, so he should know the Beilein system pretty well when he's finally eligible. As you can see, he's solidly built, and he'll give Michigan some muscle underneath.

[Tim Hardaway, Jr.](#)

6'4", 185 pounds, Shooting Guard
Palmetto, FL

Tim's is another son of a famous former NBA player, in this case Tim Hardaway, who played mostly at Miami, with shorter stints at Golden State, Dallas, Denver, and Indiana. In case you were wondering, Tim Hardaway is no relation to Anfernee ("Penny") Hardaway, even though both played in the NBA at the same time.

Anyway, back to Tim Jr. What does Michigan need the most for next season? A solid 3-point shooter, and that's what Tim will be. It sure doesn't hurt that he's quick, and passes well. We'll have to see about his defense and rebounding.

[Blake McLimans](#)

6'10", 220 pounds, Power Forward
Hamburg, NY

Blake voluntarily redshirted this season, so he'll still have freshman eligibility next season. He got to practice with the team all season, and learn the Beilein system. We saw him in the Michigan Madness events, and he looked pretty good. He's one of those quick, versatile players who can play on the perimeter, and still bang underneath. He added 10 pounds of muscle this season, but he still needs to put on another 10-15 pounds to handle the action under the basket in the Big Ten.

[Jordan Morgan](#)

6'9", 240 pounds, Power Forward/Center
Detroit, MI

Jordan took a medical redshirt year this season, so he'll still have freshman eligibility next season. Once again, he got to practice with the team most of the season, so he'll be pretty familiar with the Beilein system. Unfortunately, he injured his shoulder in early March, so he won't be able to practice until mid-summer. Sigh.

When he's (finally) healthy, Jordan will bring more height and bulk underneath, but he's still nimble and versatile. I just wish he were 3 inches taller.

[Evan Smotrycz](#)

6'9", 210 pounds, Power Forward
New Hampton, NH

What else does Michigan need, besides a solid 3-point shooter? A solid big man underneath. Evan could be that big man. We'll have to see him against Division 1 players.

Next season will be crucial. Can Beilein get things going in the right direction again? Can he get the team chemistry back that appeared to be missing this season? Be sure to check back in November, when I start writing columns for next season. Until then...

Go Blue!