Nothing But 'Net – **Week #21** – **03/19/2012** – **One And Done In The Big Dance**

The (#10) University of Michigan men's basketball team played one games in the NCAA Tournament in Nashville last week, and they lost it. On Friday (03/16/2012) they lost to Ohio University 65-60. The loss leaves Michigan with a final record of 24-10 (13-5 in the Big Ten). It also marks the only time this season that Michigan lost 2 games in a row.

The loss to Ohio was a major disappointment. It was easily the worst loss of the season, and one of the worst losses in the last 10 years. UM was the #4 seed, and Ohio was the #13 seed. Michigan won a share of the Big Ten title, and Ohio is a MAC team, fergodsakes. It's not that Ohio is a weak team, they're pretty darn good, but Michigan is much better, and they picked the absolute worst time to play the worst game of the season. They were cold and they were flat, and for the first time this season, they were flustered in the last 4 minutes of the game. Michigan has won several games this season with a strong finish, and even a decent finish would have won this one, but they were terrible down the stretch. Just awful. They trailed for most of the game, and the deficit got pretty scary several times, but UM fought back to within 3 points (63-60) with 4:12 left. Compare that to the final score (65-60). That's right: Michigan didn't score a single point in the last 4:12 of the game. They missed their last 6 shots, including a layup. That is just plain embarrassing.

The stats aren't as bad as you might expect, but they weren't good enough to beat Ohio. Michigan shot decently overall (22-for-54 = 40.7%), they shot decently from 3-point range (7-for-23 = 30.4%), and they shot fairly well from the free-throw line (9-for-11 = 81.8%). They actually won the rebounding battle (29-26), but they lost the turnover battle (10-9). The big difference was free throws. Ohio was 15-for-17 (88.2%), and those extra 6 points were more than the difference in the game.

Individually, Trey Burke (16 points) and Tim Hardaway Jr. (14 points) were the only starters to hit double figures, although Jordan Morgan (8 points) came close. The other two starters, the senior co-captains playing in their last games, played terribly. Stu Douglass shot 2-for-7 (5 points) and Zack Novak shot 1-for-6 (2 points). It was a miserable way for both of them to end their careers. They deserved a lot better, since they did so much for this program over the last 4 years.

The bench came through with 15 points, all from Evan Smotrycz, who played a great game (6-for-7 shooting, 2-for-2 from 3-point range, and 7 rebounds). Unfortunately, his one miss was the above-mentioned layup in the last 4 minutes of the game, and he had the crucial turnover in the last 10 seconds that kept Michigan from getting one final shot to tie the game. Still the loss wasn't his fault, it was a team effort, he was just the player to make the last in a long line of mistakes.

The Nothing But 'Net Expectation-O-Meter (NBNEOM) has to be reset to point to "Meets Expectations". Michigan did much better than expected in the regular season, but they were terrible in the Big Ten Tournament and NCAA Tournament. It all balances out to "Meets Expectations". It could have been so much more. Sigh.

Well, the season's over, and there's no use crying over how it ended. Check back next week for the final article of the season, with the season wrap-up, final grades, and a look at next season.

Go Blue!