

Nothing But 'Net – Week #22 – 03/26/2012 – Season Wrap-Up

The University of Michigan men's basketball team finished their season last week with a disappointing loss in the 1st (technically, 2nd) round of the [NCAA Tournament](#). Still, it was a successful season, even though it ended poorly. It's time for the end-of-season wrap-up, along with final grades, and a look ahead to next season.

Season Recap

Michigan ended the season with a record of 24-10 (13-5 in the Big Ten). This is on the upper end of what most of the experts predicted. UM also won a share of the Big Ten regular season title, along with Michigan State and Ohio State. That was definitely the highlight of the season. The bad news was how poorly they played in the [Big Ten Tournament](#) and the NCAA Tournament. They barely won their 1st game in the Big Ten Tournament vs. Minnesota, then they got blown out in their next game against Ohio State. Still, they were awarded a #4 seed in the NCAA Tournament, but that didn't stop them from losing to a #13 seed, Ohio University. It was a lousy end to a good season.

Good/Bad Wins/Losses

Not all wins are good wins, and not all losses are bad losses. This season, Michigan had a lot of good wins, a few bad wins, a couple good losses, and a few bad losses. Let's look at each category:

Good wins:

- [11/21/2011 – Beat \(#8\) Memphis, 73-61, in Maui \(HI\)](#). This was the 1st round game in the EA Sports Maui Classic. Memphis was ranked #8 at the time, and Michigan handled them very well.
- [11/23/2011 – Beat UCLA, 79-63, in Maui \(HI\)](#). This was the 3rd round game in the Maui Classic. This was not a classic UCLA team, but it was still a good win against a traditional power.
- [12/03/2011 – Beat Iowa State, 76-66, in Ann Arbor](#). Iowa State turned out to be a lot better than predicted, and Michigan beat them solidly.
- [12/10/2011 – Beat Oakland, 90-80, in the Palace of Auburn Hills](#). Oakland really wanted this one, and it was a hard-fought win.
- [01/08/2012 – Beat \(#18\) Wisconsin, 59-41, in Ann Arbor](#). This was the only game between Michigan and Wisconsin this season, and UM won it easily. After a rough start, Wisconsin went on to contend for the Big Ten title.
- [01/17/2012 – Beat \(#9\) Michigan State, 60-59, in Ann Arbor](#). This was a huge win. It also gave Michigan a 3-game winning streak against MSU.
- [01/24/2012 – Beat Purdue, 66-64, in West Lafayette](#). This was Michigan's first true road win, in an arena where they hadn't won in years, against a team that eventually made the NCAA Tournament.
- [02/01/2012 – Beat \(#20\) Indiana, 68-56, in Ann Arbor](#). Both teams were fighting to stay in the Big Ten title hunt, and IU had beaten Michigan in Bloomington (see below).
- [02/18/2012 – Beat \(#6\) Ohio State, 56-51, in Ann Arbor](#). This was probably the most impressive win of the season. Michigan controlled the tempo, and neutralized OSU's best players until the game was in hand. It was a great game, with a great crowd, at 9:00 on a Saturday night. I just wish the season had ended here. This was the high point of the season.

Bad wins:

- [01/11/2012 – Beat Northwestern, 66-64 \(overtime\), in Ann Arbor.](#) Yeah, a win is a win, but Michigan was so much better than Northwestern, but they played poorly and were lucky to scratch out a win at home.
- [02/21/2012 – Beat Northwestern, 67-55 \(overtime\), in Evanston.](#) See above. Michigan was the better team, but they squandered opportunities throughout the game, and were lucky to get to overtime. Once they got to overtime, they kicked butt.
- [03/09/2012 – Beat Minnesota, 73-69 \(overtime\), in Indianapolis.](#) Another gave full of blown opportunities against an inferior opponent. At least it resulted in a win, Michigan's last of the season.

Good losses:

- [11/22/2011 – Lost to \(#6\) Duke, 82-75, in Maui \(HI\).](#) Even though they lost, Michigan played hard, and they showed that they could play with the big boys. The Duke guards were just too hot from 3-point range.
- [01/05/2012 – Lost to \(#12\) Indiana, 73-71, in Bloomington.](#) Indiana was really tough at home, and Michigan almost managed to beat them. It was a tough loss to swallow, but it was an encouraging performance.

Bad losses:

- [11/29/2011 – Lost to Virginia, 70-58, in Charlottesville.](#) Michigan was the better team, but they sure didn't play like it. They were lost on offense.
- [01/14/2012 – Lost to Iowa, 75-59, in Iowa City.](#) Once again, Michigan was the (much) better team, but they looked lost and confused out there.
- [02/25/2012 – Lost to Purdue, 75-61, in Ann Arbor.](#) This was Michigan's only home loss, and it came at the worst possible time. It was Senior Night, and if Michigan could have won this one, they would have won the Big Ten title outright.
- [03/16/2012 – Lost to Ohio University, 65-60, in Nashville.](#) This was easily the most embarrassing loss of the season, and one of the most embarrassing losses in the last 10 years. Michigan was flat on offense, and they couldn't stop Ohio's star guard on defense. It was a disaster.

Final Stats

Looking at the [final season statistics](#), a few patterns jump out:

- They liked to slow things down. The average score for the season was 66.3 – 61.5.
- They shot pretty well overall: 808-for-1777 = 45.5%.
- They shot pretty well from 3-point range: 276-for-788 = 35.0%.
- They shot pretty well from the free-throw line: 363-for-503 = 72.2%.
- They didn't rebound very well: they were out-rebounded 1076-1047.
- They didn't turn the ball over much: they had 370 turnovers (10.9/game) vs. 424 for their opponents (12.5/game).
- They had more assists than turnovers: 431-370.
- They were perimeter oriented: they shot 44.3% (788-of-1777) of their shots from 3-point range, and they got to the free-throw line less than their opponents (503-526).

Final Grades

It's time to look at the final grades. This season, I graded the players after the non-conference portion of the schedule (01/02/2012), after the first half of the Big Ten schedule (01/30/2012), and now. Here are the grades:

Freshmen

[Max Bielfeldt](#): Incomplete (1st: Incomplete, 2nd: Incomplete)

Max was voluntarily redshirted this season.

[Carlton Brundidge](#): C (1st: C, 2nd: C)

Carlton didn't play much (44 minutes in 15 games = 2.9 minutes/game), which is probably why [he left the team at the end of the season](#). No big loss. He never really did much when he was out there. He scored 6 points, 4 of them free throws.

[Trey Burke](#): A (1st: A, 2nd: A)

Trey did everything that we hoped he would, and much more. He had a few (very few!) sub-par games, and he occasionally tried to do too much, but in general he was the most talented player on the floor in most of the games, regardless of class level. He led the team in minutes played, he was the leading scorer, and he led the team in assists, blocks, and steals. When he's on the floor, Michigan just plays better. See below ("Looking Ahead") for the potential bad news.

[Sai Tummala](#): Incomplete (1st: Incomplete, 2nd: Incomplete)

Sai was voluntarily redshirted this season.

Sophomores

[Colton Christian](#): C- (1st: C, 2nd: C-)

Colton didn't play much (51 minutes in 19 games = 2.7 minutes/game), which is probably why [he left the team at the end of the season](#). No big loss. He was too short to be a "big", and not a good enough ballhandler and shooter to be a guard. He scored 7 points this season.

[Tim Hardaway, Jr.](#): A- (1st: A, 2nd: A-)

Tim started the season with a bang, but he leveled off a little once Big Ten play started. He tended to disappear for large chunks of the game (entire 1st halves), and his shooting percentages sagged a little in Big Ten play, but he's still an important player.

[Jon Horford](#): Incomplete (1st: B-, 2nd: Incomplete)

Jon showed great improvement over last season, and was looking more comfortable out there, then he hurt his foot. He missed the last 25 games, and he's going to get a medical redshirt for this season. He'll be back next season with sophomore eligibility.

[Blake McLimans](#): C+ (1st: C+, 2nd: C+)

With Horford out, McLimans got more minutes earlier in the game, but he didn't do much with them. He averaged 0.8 points/game, he got surprisingly few rebounds (21, in 30 games), and looked a little lost out there sometimes.

[Jordan Morgan](#): B+ (1st: B+, 2nd: B+)

Jordan just wasn't as effective this season as he was last season. He showed flashes of his old self, then he disappeared again. Still, he averaged 7.3 points/game, he shot 61.9% from the floor, and he was Michigan's leading rebounder.

[Evan Smotrycz](#): B (1st: A, 2nd: B)

Evan had a real up-and-down season. He had several games where he was on fire, but he had just as many games where he was barely there. He was asked to play center, and he gave it a good shot, but he's more of a shooting forward. He shot a great percentage overall (48.1%), and he had the best 3-point shooting percentage on the team (43.5%). He was the 2nd leading rebounder on the team, and the 4th leading scorer. [Unfortunately, he quit the team after the season.](#) He will be missed.

Juniors

[Eso Akunne](#): C- (1st: C, 2nd: C)

Eso didn't play much (12 games, 48 minutes), and he didn't score much (20 points), but he shot well (7-for-8 = 87.5% overall, 4-for-5 = 80.0% from 3-point range). Unfortunately, [he broke a bone in his foot during the game at Purdue on 01/24/2012](#), and he missed the rest of the season.

[Josh Bartelstein](#): Incomplete (1st: Incomplete, 2nd: Incomplete)

Josh only played in "mop up" action this season (11 games, 14 minutes), but he did manage to hit a 3-pointer in the Ohio State game in the Big Ten Tournament. He also writes a very interesting and informative blog on MGoBlue.com.

[Matt Vogrich](#): C (1st: C, 2nd: C)

Matt came off the bench in every game this season, and he did OK, but not great. He hit double figures once (Arkansas-Pine Bluff), but he also had several scoreless games. He shot pretty well overall (38.2%), and he shot OK from 3-point range (30.2%).

Seniors

[Stu Douglass](#): B (1st: B, 2nd: B)

For the first half of the season Stu was the "6th man", but he replaced Smotrycz in the starting lineup starting with the home Michigan State game. He scored 7.5 pts/game, which is pretty good, and his shooting percentages were decent

(40.6% and 33.8%). He did a pretty good job running the point when he spelled Burke, and he helped settle things down when the team got a little crazy. Most importantly, he provided senior leadership.

[Zack Novak](#): A- (1st: A-, 2nd: A-)

After getting to play his natural position (shooting guard) in the "preseason", Zack had to move back to playing "over his head" at small forward in several Big Ten games. Once again, he had to play out of position, guarding players 4-6 inches taller and 30-50 pounds heavier, and he held his own. Unfortunately, he kind of faded in the last few games, but that doesn't diminish all he did for the program over the last 4 years. He is a fierce competitor, and a true leader.

[Corey Person](#): Incomplete (1st: Incomplete, 2nd: Incomplete)

Even though he has junior eligibility, Corey was honored during the Senior Night festivities, so I guess that means he's out of here. He's another player who only played in "garbage time" (10 games, 11 minutes), but he came on strong in 2 of his final 3 games, when he scored 4 points in the home Purdue game, then 7 points in the Big Ten Tournament game vs. Ohio State.

Looking Ahead

Even though the season ended with a whimper instead of a bang, things were looking very promising for next season, with most of the key players returning from this season's team, and a very impressive recruiting class set to come in. Then the bad news hit, all on the same day: first, [the three players mentioned above \(Carlton Brundidge, Colton Christian, and Evan Smotrycz\) all decided to leave the team at the same time](#), then [the best player on the team \(Trey Burke\) announced that he was examining his NBA draft options](#). None of this is good news, but it might still work out OK. Losing Smotrycz is a blow, but the incoming recruits should soften that blow somewhat. The other two players (Brundidge and Christian) didn't play much, and they won't be missed. The big question mark is Burke. If he decides to leave, Michigan will be in bad shape, with no one on the roster to take his place. [Coach Beilein](#) will be working hard to find a good point guard for next season, either to replace Burke if he leaves, or to back him up.

Of course, Michigan is losing 3 players to graduation: Douglass, Novak, and Person. Person didn't play much, so losing him won't have much impact, but Douglass and Novak have both been key contributors for 4 years. They will be missed.

The rest of the news is good. A solid nucleus of returning players will be joined by 3 very promising incoming freshmen:

[Mitch McGary](#) – 6'10", 250 pounds, Center. Mitch is the center that Michigan has needed for the last 10 years. He's tall, he's big, he's strong, and he's a pretty good all-around player.

[Glenn Robinson III](#) – 6'6", 192 pounds, Forward. Glenn ("Trey") is very athletic, and a great scorer.

[Nik Stauskas](#) – 6'6", 205 pounds, Forward. Nik could be the elusive "great 3-point shooter" that the Beilein system needs.

Well, that's all for this season. Have a good summer, and be sure to check back here the week before the first game next season to get caught up on the 2012-2013 team.

Go Blue!