

## **Nothing But 'Net – Week #19 – 03/04/2013 – The Worst And Best Games Of The Season**

The (#4) University of Michigan men's basketball team played two games last week, and they were the worst and best games of the season. [On Wednesday \(02/27/2013\), they lost at Penn State 84-78](#), then [on Sunday \(03/03/2013\), they beat \(#9\) Michigan State 58-57](#) in Crisler Arena. The loss and the win leave Michigan with a record of 24-5 overall, 11-5 in Big Ten play. They are tied for 2<sup>nd</sup> place in the Big Ten.

The loss at Penn State was not only the worst game of the season, it is one of the most embarrassing losses in Michigan basketball history. Michigan was playing to keep control of their own destiny in the Big Ten title race, and PSU came into the game 0-14 in Big Ten contests this season. Michigan had a 15-point lead (66-51) with 10:39 left in the game, and that should have been the end of things, but PSU caught fire, and UM "played not to lose", and it was a disaster. It was like a nightmare, watching Michigan waste one possession after another on offense, and watching Penn State make one circus shot after another. Everything that could go wrong did, and it just wouldn't stop. If you put those same two teams out there again with the same game situation (Michigan up 66-51 with 10:39 to play), Michigan would win the game 999 times out of 1000. This was the 1000<sup>th</sup> time. It was horrible.

After the debacle at Penn State on Wednesday, and the way Michigan State thumped Michigan up in East Lansing last month, I was almost afraid to watch the rematch on Sunday. However, Michigan came to play, and it was a close, exciting game the whole way. Michigan State's biggest lead was 7 points (31-24) with 1:03 left in the 1<sup>st</sup> half. Michigan's biggest lead was 10 points (52-42) with 4:36 left in the game. Most of the game, the lead was 3-5 points. It was tied (56-56) with 54 seconds left. MSU had the ball, down one point (58-57) with 8 seconds left, but Michigan stole the ball in the last second, and MSU never got off a shot to try for the win. It was very exciting, and their best game of the season.

So, which team is the "real Michigan"? The one that lost to the worst team in the Big Ten, or the one that overcame adversity and beat a Top-10 team just 4 days later? Well, both, actually. This team is talented enough to beat any team in the country, and young and fragile enough to lose to any team in the country. Despite the horrible loss to PSU, they still stand a small chance of tying for the Big Ten title, but they'll need some help. If (#1) Indiana loses at home to (#16) Ohio State on Tuesday (03/05/2013), Michigan can share the title with Indiana (and maybe a couple other teams) if they win both of their final two games. Michigan already got one "gift" outside win, when Indiana lost to Minnesota last week; getting a 2<sup>nd</sup> outside win would almost be too much to hope for.

Let's look at the game stats for both games. First, the ugly [Penn State](#) loss: Michigan actually shot pretty well overall (30-for-58 = 51.7%), but they shot poorly from 3-point range (5-for-20 = 25.0%). They shot a reasonable number of free throws, and made a decent number of them: 13-for-20 = 65.0%. The problem was that PSU shot 3-pointers way over their season average: 10-for-20 = 50.0%. That was the difference in the game. Michigan won the rebounding battle (37-30), but lost the turnover battle (15-9). The stats for the [MSU](#) win are even worse: UM shot poorly overall (25-for-59 = 42.4%), and they were absolutely horrendous from 3-point range (0-for-12 = 0.0%). I can't remember the last time Michigan failed to make at least one 3-pointer in a game. It was disgusting. The only thing that saved them was that MSU shot even worse overall: 21-for-59 = 35.6%. Michigan didn't shoot many free throws, but they made most of them: 8-for-11 = 72.7%. Just like the game in East Lansing, MSU crushed Michigan on the boards (44-29), but they were sloppy with the ball, and Michigan won the turnover battle (7-18). Those extra 11 possessions Michigan got due to turnovers just about balanced out the 15 extra possessions MSU got due to rebounds.

Individually, only one player hit double figures in both games last week: [Trey Burke](#), with 18 points vs. PSU and 21 points vs. MSU. Trey also had a season-high 6 turnovers vs. PSU, which made it very hard to win the game.

4 players hit double figures in one game last week:

- [Tim Hardaway Jr.](#) - 19 and 6 points.
- [Mitch McGary](#) - 4 and 11 points. Mitch is back on the bench, now that [Jordan Morgan](#) is well enough to start.
- [Jordan Morgan](#) - 11 and 4 points. Jordan finally looked comfortable on the floor.
- [Nik Stauskas](#) - 12 and 0 points. Nik only played 4 minutes of the MSU game, since he caught an elbow to his face that required 12 stitches.

The other starter ([Glenn Robinson III](#)) scored 8 points in each game.

Besides Mitch McGary, the bench players had a mixed week at scoring:

- [Spike Albrecht](#) - 0 and 0 points.
- [Jon Horford](#) - 6 and 0 points.
- [Caris LeVert](#) - 0 and 8 points.
- [Matt Vogrich](#) - 0 and 0 points.

Including McGary's 15 points, that's 29 points of bench scoring, which isn't too bad.

### **This Week**

This is the final week of the regular season, and all 12 Big Ten teams have 2 games this week. Michigan plays at Purdue on Wednesday (03/06/2013, 7:00 p.m. EST, BTN), then at home vs. (#1) Indiana on Sunday (03/10/2013, 4:00 p.m., CBS). After the disastrous loss at Penn State, I'm not taking any road wins for granted, but Michigan should beat Purdue. The game against Indiana should be another battle, just like the Michigan State and Ohio State games in Crisler. Michigan has the talent to win; we'll see if they have the guts to pull it out.

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

Go Blue!