

Nothing But 'Net – Week #20 – 03/11/2013 – So Close

The (#7) University of Michigan men's basketball team came **THIS CLOSE** to earning a share of the Big Ten title on Sunday, but the last second game-winning shot hung on the rim then fell off, and with it went UM's title hopes. After a long, brutal campaign, it all came down to one final chance, and Michigan came up an inch short. It was so sad and frustrating.

Michigan played two games last week, and they won one and lost one. [On Wednesday \(03/06/2013\), they beat Purdue 80-75](#) in West Lafayette, then [on Sunday \(03/10/2013\), they lost to \(#2\) Indiana 72-71](#) in Crisler Arena. The win and the loss leave Michigan with a final regular season record of 25-6 overall, 12-6 in Big Ten play. They ended up tied for 4th place in the Big Ten.

The win at Purdue wasn't particularly pretty, but it was important. It kept alive Michigan's chance to share the title with a win over Indiana on Sunday. Michigan started strong in the Purdue game, and had a nice 12-point lead (21-9) with 9:30 left in the 1st half. Then, the roof fell in. Michigan couldn't buy a basket, and Purdue couldn't miss, and the whole 12-point lead disappeared in 7 minutes: Purdue led 29-28 with 2:30 left in the half. They led 34-30 at halftime, and pushed the lead up to 12 points (52-40) with 12 minutes to go in the game. Things looked grim for Michigan, then they started clicking. They cut the deficit down to 3 points (55-52) with 7:43 to go, and finally got the lead back (59-58) with 5:22 to go. The lead swung back and forth for the next couple minutes, until UM went ahead for good (65-64) with 3:04 left. Michigan shot their free throws well (spoiler alert: big problem in the Indiana game) down the stretch, and hung on for the big road win.

The Indiana game was very intense. Crisler was packed and loud, and the two teams played hard and pretty well. The officials were weak, but that's not surprising in the Big Ten. Did the officials affect the final outcome? Maybe, but it was too close to say for sure. In any case, it was an exciting game, with an exciting finish. IU opened up a quick 10-3 lead with 16:05 to play in the 1st half. Michigan roared back, and went up 15-10 with 11:39 to play in the half. UM pushed the lead up to 11 points (27-16) with 5:03 left, but IU managed to claw their way back to within 3 points (33-30) by halftime. Michigan maintained a slim lead for the first 8 minutes of the 2nd half, then IU got the lead back (48-46) with 12:07 left in the game. The lead see-sawed back and forth the rest of the way, but Michigan managed to grab a sudden 5-point lead (71-66) with 52 seconds left in the game. IU fouled, Michigan missed their free throws, IU made their shots, and it all came down to one final possession for Michigan, down one point (72-71) with the ball and 13 seconds left. Michigan missed a shot with 2 seconds left, got the rebound, put up another shot, and watched it roll off the rim for the loss. It was a tough loss, and it was no fun watching IU celebrate their outright championship on the Crisler floor.

How did UM manage to lose a 5-point lead in the last 52 seconds? Poor free throw shooting. Michigan missed the front end of two 1-and-1 situations. If they had made either of them, they probably would have won the game.

Time to look at the stats for some answers. In the [Purdue](#) game, Michigan didn't shoot very well overall (25-for-59 = 42.4%), and they didn't shoot 3-pointers very well (7-for-18 = 38.9%). They got to the free throw line a lot, and they shot free throws well (23-for-29 = 79.3%), which won them the game. They got hammered on the boards again (42-30), but they won the turnover battle handily (5-13). In the [Indiana](#) game, Michigan shot pretty poorly overall (27-for-65 = 41.5%), but they shot well from 3-point range (10-for-22 = 45.5%). They shot terribly from the free-throw line (7-for-13 = 53.8%), which cost them the game. They really got hammered on the boards (53-30), but they won the turnover battle big-time (6-14).

Individually, 3 players hit double figures in both games last week:

- [Trey Burke](#) - 26 points vs. Purdue and 20 points vs. Indiana.
- [Tim Hardaway Jr.](#) - 16 and 11 points.

- [Nik Stauskas](#) - 17 and 12 points.

One player hit double figures in only one game last week: [Glenn Robinson III](#) had 6 and 13 points.

The remaining starter, [Jordan Morgan](#), had 2 and 8 points last week.

The bench players had a mixed week at scoring:

- [Spike Albrecht](#) - 2 and 3 points.
- [Max Bielfeldt](#) - 0 and 0 points.
- [Jon Horford](#) - 2 and 2 points.
- [Caris LeVert](#) - 0 and 0 points.
- [Mitch McGary](#) - 6 and 2 points.
- [Blake McLimans](#) - DNP and 0 points.
- [Matt Vogrich](#) - 3 and 0 points.

That's 20 points of bench scoring, which isn't very good.

This Week

Well, the regular season is over, and it was something of a disappointment. On to the [Big Ten Tournament](#), which is being held in Chicago this week. Michigan is the #5 seed, which means that they just missed getting a bye on Thursday. Instead, they play the #12 seed, Penn State, on Thursday (03/14/2013) at about 2:30 p.m. EDT (25 minutes after the end of the first game, which starts at noon EDT). The game will be on BTN. If they beat Penn State, they will play the #4 seed, Wisconsin, at about 2:30 p.m. EDT on Friday (03/15/2013). That game will be on ESPN. Next would be the winner of the Indiana/(Illinois/Minnesota) game, presumably Indiana, at 1:40 p.m. EDT on Saturday, and then the championship game on Sunday. The full bracket is [here](#).

Michigan has the talent to win the whole tournament, and the youth and inexperience to lose in the Thursday game to Penn State. We'll just have to watch the games to see how they do.

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

Go Blue!