

## Nothing But 'Net – Week #21 – 03/18/2013 – Short Run In The Big Ten Tournament

The (#6) University of Michigan men's basketball team had a disappointingly short run in the [Big Ten Tournament](#) in Chicago this week. They won their first game, then lost their second. They were the #5 seed, so that's what they were expected to do, but it was still disappointing. [On Thursday \(03/14/2013\), they beat the #12 seed, Penn State, 83-66](#), then [on Friday \(03/15/2013\), they lost to the #4 seed, Wisconsin, 68-59](#). The win and the loss leave UM with a record of 26-7.

The win over Penn State may not look impressive or important, but it was both. Remember that Penn State embarrassed Michigan just a couple weeks ago (02/27/2013) in State College, and they were the scariest #12 seed in recent memory. Michigan started off where they left off in their last game against PSU, and promptly fell behind 14-3 in the first 5:30. They finally woke up, took the lead, and never gave it up. They pushed the lead as high as 9 (35-26) with 3:23 left in the 1<sup>st</sup> half, but let it shrink down to 2 (35-33) at halftime. It took another 7 minutes after halftime, but Michigan finally pulled away. They got the lead up to 15 points (62-47) with 10:22 left, which was exactly the situation they had in the Debacle at State College 2 weeks ago. This time, instead of folding, Michigan increased their lead up to 19 (71-52) with 7:10 left, and won by 17. It was encouraging to see them play well at the end of a game.

Unfortunately, Michigan didn't play well at the end of the Wisconsin game. In fact, they didn't play particularly well at the beginning of the game either. Wisconsin played terribly to start the game, but UM didn't take advantage of the chance to blow the game wide open. Time after time, Wisconsin misfired on a shot or turned the ball over, and UM didn't value the possession and took a wild shot or missed an easy layup. Michigan managed to build a 10-point lead (16-6) early, and they should have had a 20-point lead at halftime, but instead they were clinging to a shaky 3-point lead (20-17). Wisconsin tied the game up (24-24) with 17:21 left, then took the lead (26-24) with 16:24 left. They never gave it up. They pushed the lead as high as 11 points (56-45) with 6:01 left, but Michigan came storming back. They got the deficit down to 2 points (56-54) with 3:35 left, but only scored 3 more points the rest of the way. It was pretty sad.

So, what happened? How did Michigan fall apart? Turnovers and poor defense. They built their early lead based on poor play by Wisconsin, not good defense. Once Wisconsin stopped playing stupid, Michigan couldn't stop them. Against any other team, Michigan might have hung in and answered them point-for-point, but not against Wisconsin. Their defense is just too good. Michigan couldn't score on them, and they couldn't stop them. It was ugly.

Time to look at the stats to see how ugly. First, the [Penn State](#) game, which wasn't ugly at all. Overall, Michigan shot pretty well (29-for-63 = 46.0%), and they shot fairly well from 3-point range (6-for-18 = 33.3%). They got to the free-throw line often, and shot a nice percentage (19-for-23 = 82.6%). They won the rebounding battle (36-32) and the turnover battle (4-8). No problems here. The stats for the [Wisconsin](#) game are ugly: overall shooting was pretty bad (23-for-57 = 40.4%), and 3-point shooting was even worse (3-for-13 = 23.1%). They shot a reasonable number of free throws, but didn't make many (10-for-17 = 58.8%). They actually managed to win the rebounding battle (38-37), but they lost the turnover battle (11-9). Many of those turnovers were early in the game, when Wisconsin was missing everything, and many of them were unforced. Basketball is a game of momentum, and Michigan missed their big chance to seize the momentum early and put the game out of reach. When Wisconsin snapped out of their funk, they were still in the game, and they came back and won.

Individually, only 2 players hit double figures in both games last week:

- [Trey Burke](#) - 21 points vs. Penn State and 19 points vs. Wisconsin. They ended the season scoring at least 15 points in every Big Ten game.
- [Tim Hardaway Jr.](#) - 15 and 14 points.

3 players hit double figures in only one game last week:

- [Jon Horford](#) - 11 and 5 points.
- [Mitch McGary](#) - 10 and 9 points. Mitch also had 11 rebounds vs. Penn State, 10 of them in the 1<sup>st</sup> half. He had a double-double (10 points, 10 rebounds) at halftime.
- [Nik Stauskas](#) - 15 and 4 points. The Wisconsin game was one of the rare times Nik failed to hit double figures.

The remaining 2 starters didn't hit double figures in either game:

- [Glenn Robinson III](#) - 5 and 8 points.
- [Jordan Morgan](#) - 4 and 0 points.

Besides Horford and McGary, the other bench players had a mixed week at scoring:

- [Eso Akunne](#) - 0 and DNP points.
- [Spike Albrecht](#) - 2 and 0 points.
- [Max Bielfeldt](#) - 0 and 0 points.
- [Caris LeVert](#) - 0 and 0 points.
- [Blake McLimans](#) - 0 and DNP points.
- [Corey Person](#) - 0 and DNP points.
- [Matt Vogrich](#) - 0 and 0 points.

Besides Horford (16) and McGary (19), that's 2 points of bench scoring, which isn't very good.

### **This Week**

The [NCAA Tournament \(bracket\)](#) starts this week, and Michigan is in it. They are a #4 seed in the South (Arlington, TX) Region, and they play their first game against the #13 seed, South Dakota State on Thursday (03/21/2013) in the Palace of Auburn Hills (MI), time and TV info TBD. If they win that game, they play again on Saturday (03/23/2013) against the winner of the (#5 seed) VCU (Virginia Commonwealth) vs. (#12) Akron game. Both of these games are winnable, and it would be gratifying to see UM make it to the Sweet Sixteen for the first time in a long time. It was pretty depressing to see Michigan drop from a #1 seed at the end of January to a #4 seed in mid-March, but they can still prove that they can be as good as they looked at the end of January.

As I said before the Big Ten Tournament, Michigan has the talent to win the whole tournament, and the youth and inexperience to lose in the Thursday game to South Dakota 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!