

Nothing But 'Net – Week #23 – 04/01/2013 – Final Four Bound!

The (#10) University of Michigan men's basketball team is going to the Final Four in the [NCAA Tournament](#)! It's been 20 years (1992-1993) since UM made it to the Final Four, but they finally did it. Michigan, the #4 seed in the South Region, played two games in the tournament last week, both in Cowboys Stadium in Arlington (TX), and they won both of them. [On Friday \(03/29/2013\), they beat the #1 seed, Kansas, 87-85 in overtime](#), then [on Sunday \(03/31/2013\), they beat the #3 seed, Florida, 79-59](#). The two wins raise Michigan's record to 30-7.

The Kansas game has to be the most impressive comeback in Michigan basketball history. Sure, they might have come from further behind late in some other game, but this was more impressive than any other comeback because of the situation and the opponent. The situation: an NCAA Tournament game, in the Sweet Sixteen, playing for a spot in the Elite Eight, on national TV. The opponent: #1 seed Kansas, a team that was also ranked #1 in the nation earlier in the season. The comeback: down 14 points (68-54) with 6:50 left in the game. Or, how about down 10 points (72-62) with 2:52 left? Not scary enough? Try: down 5 points (76-71) with 21 seconds left. It took an ice-water-in-his-veins step-back 3-pointer from [Trey Burke](#) with 4 seconds left to tie the game, and more heroics in overtime to win it. But, the 3-pointer that sent the game into overtime is "The Shot" that everyone will still be watching and talking about 20 years from now. In any case, it was a very impressive, and unexpected, comeback. Michigan had been behind almost the entire game, usually by 8-10-12 points. They looked beaten when the deficit grew to 14 points with less than 7 minutes left, but that's when they caught fire. They were like a completely different team. It was amazing (a-maize-ing?)

After the tight, scary game vs. Kansas, we were expecting more of the same vs. Florida. Wrong. UM came out on fire, and got ahead 13-0 after just 3 minutes! The lead got as high as 24 points (41-17) in the 1st half, before sinking to "only" 17 points (47-30) at halftime. Florida staged a mini-rally (6-0) to get the lead back down to 11 points (47-36) in the first 2:30 of the 2nd half, but Michigan pushed the lead back up to 18 points (56-38) in the next 3 minutes, and never let it get below 14 points again. UM won going away, and it was an easy victory. All 15 players got to play, and even the senior scrubs scored on Florida. It was lots of fun.

Time for the stats, and they're very interesting. In the [Kansas](#) game, Michigan shot pretty well overall (35-for-71 = 49.3%), and not too bad from 3-point range (8-for-23 = 34.8%). They shot pretty poorly from the free-throw line (9-for-17 = 52.9%), but they won the rebounding battle (38-35) and the turnover battle (10-13). Interestingly, Kansas shot better in all 3 phases of the game (overall: 36-for-66 = 54.5%, 3-pointers: 6-for-16 = 37.5%, free throws: 7-for-10 = 70.0%), but the extra possessions from rebounds and turnovers were enough to give UM the narrow victory. Michigan shot much better in the [Florida](#) game. Overall, they shot pretty well (30-for-65 = 46.2%), but they really shot well from 3-point range (10-for-19 = 52.6%). They shot free throws better (9-for-13 = 69.2%), but they narrowly lost the rebounding battle (35-36) and narrowly won the turnover battle (11-13). The big difference in this game was defense: they held Florida to 41.1% (23-for-56) overall shooting, and 20.0% (2-for-10) 3-point shooting.

Looking at the individual stats, 3 of the 5 starters hit double figures in both games:

- [Trey Burke](#) - 23 points vs. Kansas and 15 points vs. Florida. All of Trey's points vs. Kansas came in the 2nd half and overtime; he was shut out in the 1st half. He also had 10 assists vs. Kansas, for a double-double.
- [Mitch McGary](#) - 25 and 11 points. Mitch continued his hot play in the NCAA Tournament. His 25 points vs. Kansas were another career-high, and he tied his career-high with 14 more rebounds vs. Kansas, for another double-double. Trey may have been the star in Michigan's big comeback in the Kansas game, but Mitch kept Michigan close enough for most of the game so that Trey could still pull the game out at the end.

- [Nik Stauskas](#) - 11 and 22 points. Nik managed to scratch out 11 points on 4-for-7 shooting in the Kansas game, but he went 1-for-4 shooting 3-pointers. Magically, he found his 3-point stroke in the Florida game, going 6-for-6. That was the Nik Stauskas performance we have been waiting for all season, and he picked the right time to do it. His 3-pointers destroyed Florida's morale in the 1st half, and that made the victory easy.

All 5 starters hit double figures in the Kansas game, but only 3 of them did it in the Florida game. Here's how the other 2 starters did:

- [Tim Hardaway Jr.](#) - 10 points and 9 points. Tim had a rough week shooting, going 4-for-11 vs. Kansas and 3-for-13 vs. Florida. He was 1-for-3 and 1-for-5 from 3-point range. It was ugly.
- [Glenn Robinson III](#) - 13 and 6 points.

The bench players didn't play much vs. Kansas, but everyone played at the end of the Florida blowout. Here's how they did:

- [Eso Akunne](#) - DNP and 0 points.
- [Spike Albrecht](#) - 3 and 7 points. Spike did a nice job giving Trey a rest, and he did pretty well when he and Trey were in the game together. He was a real spark in the Florida game, with 2 steals for layups and a nice 3-pointer.
- [Josh Bartelstein](#) - DNP and 0 points.
- [Max Bielfeldt](#) - DNP and 0 points.
- [Jon Horford](#) - 0 and 6 points. Jon scored his 6 points vs. Florida in only 8 minutes.
- [Caris LeVert](#) - 0 and 0 points.
- [Blake McLimans](#) - DNP and 0 points.
- [Jordan Morgan](#) - 2 and 0 points. Jordan played more minutes this week: 5 vs. Kansas and 6 vs. Florida. He looked more confident out there, and he was an asset on defense.
- [Corey Person](#) - DNP and 0 points.
- [Matt Vogrich](#) - DNP and 3 points. Matt hit a gorgeous 3-pointer in "garbage time" in the Florida game. It was sweet.

Yay! More bench scoring: 21 points in 2 games. It was great to get contributions from Albrecht and Horford. Michigan still needs more from LeVert and Morgan.

This Week

This is it: the Final Four of the NCAA Tournament. It's a great honor for Michigan to have made it this far, and they have exceeded most people's expectations, but there's no reason they can't win one or two more games. This week, there is only one game, since the National Semifinal games are played on Saturday (04/06/2013) and the National Championship game is next Monday (04/08/2013). Michigan plays the #4 seed from the East Region, Syracuse, on Saturday at 8:49 p.m. EDT on CBS, in the Georgia Dome in Atlanta (GA). If they win that game, they will play the winner of the (#1 Midwest) Louisville vs. (#9 West) Wichita State game.

Once again, Michigan matches up pretty well against any of the other 3 teams in Atlanta. Certainly, Louisville is the favorite to win it all, but Michigan has the talent to beat them. If they keep playing at the high level they've shown through the first 4 games, they'll do fine. As I said several times in the last couple weeks, Michigan has the talent to win the whole tournament, and the youth and inexperience to lose to any team. 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!