

Nothing But 'Net – Week #23 – 03/31/2014 – (Elite) Eight Is Enough

The (#7) University of Michigan men's basketball team played two games this week in the [NCAA Tournament](#) in Indianapolis, and they won the first and lost the second. They were the #2 seed in the Midwest Region. [On Friday \(03/28/2014\), they beat the #11 seed, Tennessee, 73-71](#), then [on Sunday \(03/30/2014\), they lost to the #8 seed, Kentucky, 75-72](#). The win and the loss leave Michigan with a final record of 28-9. Unfortunately, the loss knocks Michigan out of the tournament, just one game short of a 2nd consecutive Final Four.

While it's certainly disappointing that UM got knocked out of the tournament, they did much better than anyone could have predicted in mid-December. At that point, [they had just lost a 2-point heartbreaker \(72-70\) at home to then #1 Arizona](#), and their record was 6-4. Just a few days later, their preseason All-American center, [Mitch McGary](#), announced that [he was going to have surgery on his ailing back](#), and he was done for the season. Things looked dismal for this season's team, but they pulled it together and:

- Won the Big Ten regular season championship by 3 games.
- Got to (and lost) the Big Ten tournament championship game.
- Earned a #2 seed in the NCAA Tournament.
- Made it to the Elite Eight for the 2nd year in a row.

Not bad.

Both games this week were close and exciting, with both game decided in the last few seconds. The 1st half of the Tennessee game was a see-saw battle until the 10:00 mark, when Michigan went on a nice 25-13 run to end the half up 45-34. Michigan kept the lead around 11 points for the first half of the 2nd half, then UT started slowly cutting into it. Still, UM had a 10-point lead (70-60) with 3:40 to go, and it looked like they could hold UT off. Although they never lost the lead, they did let it shrink down to 1 point (72-71) with 10 second left, then they hit a free throw and kept Tennessee from getting off a shot. It was a narrow escape, but that's all you need in a single-elimination tournament.

Michigan got an early lead on Kentucky, and managed to stay ahead or tied for the whole 1st half. The game was tied (37-37) at halftime, and UK finally got a lead in the 2nd half. The game was another see-saw affair, with both teams opening up small leads, before the other team came back to tie it up or go ahead. It was tied (72-72) with 27 seconds left, and UK got the last shot. They made it, with only 2.6 seconds left, and UM didn't have time to get off a good shot to tie it. It was a sad way to end an amazing season. It really felt like Michigan was a Team of Destiny, but the basketball gods didn't see it that way.

One last time: Stats? Stats!

In the [Tennessee](#) game, Michigan shot pretty well overall (27/49 = 55.1%), they shot 3-pointers very well (11/20 = 55.0%), and they shot free throws very well (8/10 = 80.0%). They lost the rebounding battle (barely: 26-28) and the turnover battle (13-7). It was the turnover margin that made the game close.

The stats for the [Kentucky](#) game are a lot less impressive. Michigan didn't shoot very well overall (27/57 = 47.4%), they didn't shoot very well from 3-point range (7/18 = 38.9%), but they did shoot free throws pretty well (11/14 = 78.6%). As expected, they got hammered on the boards (35-24), but they won the turnover battle (7-11). The game was lost on the boards.

Individually, 3 Michigan players hit double figures in both games:

- [Jordan Morgan](#) - 15 points vs. Tennessee and 11 points vs. Kentucky. Jordan was the leading scorer for UM in the UT game.
- [Glenn Robinson III](#) - 13 and 14 points. GR3 hit all his 3-pointers this week: 1-for-1 vs. UT, and 2-for-2 vs. UK.

- [Nik Stauskas](#). 14 and 24 points. Nik had a tough time with his 3-point shot in both games: 3-for-8 vs. UT, and 2-for-7 vs. UK.

[Caris LeVert](#) hit double figures (10 points) in the Tennessee game, but fell just a little short (9 points) in the Kentucky game.

5 other players scored in at least one game, just not in double figures:

- [Spike Albrecht](#) - 2 and 0 points.
- [Jon Horford](#) - 1 and 6 points.
- [Zak Irvin](#) - 9 and 5 points.
- [Derrick Walton Jr.](#) - 9 and 3 points.

[Max Bielfeldt](#) played in the Kentucky game, but didn't score.

This Week

Michigan is done for the season, but I'm not. Check back next week for the Season Wrap-Up, Final Grades, and a Look Ahead To Next Season.

Go Blue!