

Nothing But 'Net – Week #20 – 03/14/2016 – Big Ten Tournament

The University of Michigan men's basketball team played three games this week, all as the #8 seed in the [Big Ten Tournament](#) in Indianapolis, and they won the first two and lost the third one. [On Thursday \(03/10/2016\), they beat the #9 seed, Northwestern, 72-70 \(in overtime\), on Friday \(03/11/2016\), they beat the #1 seed, \(#10\) Indiana, 72-69](#), then [on Saturday \(03/12/2016\), they lost to the #4 seed, \(#13\) Purdue, 76-59](#). The 2 wins and 1 loss leave Michigan with an overall record of 22-12 (10-8 in the Big Ten).

Michigan came into the Big Ten Tournament needing two wins to get into the [NCAA Tournament](#), and they got them. [Michigan earned a First Four berth as a #11 seed in the East regional, playing the other #11 seed, Tulsa](#). More about Tulsa and the play-in game below. Michigan played a decent game against an underrated Northwestern team on Thursday, but they played a great game against a powerful Indiana team on Friday. They were tired by the time they played their third game in three days against Purdue on Saturday, and that did them in. Still, it was a good run, and Michigan played better than they have in a month.

The Northwestern game was frustrating. Michigan is obviously a better team, but they kept shooting themselves in the foot any time they had a chance to build a comfortable lead and put Northwestern away. UM started the game on fire. Northwestern hit a quick 3-pointer to lead 3-0, then Michigan rattled off 16 straight points in 5 minutes to go up 16-3 with 15:00 left in the 1st half. They traded baskets with Northwestern for the next few minutes, and still led by 12 points (23-11) with 10:38 to go in the half. Instead of putting Northwestern away, they allowed them to go on a quick 12-2 run, and suddenly UM only led by 2 points (25-23) with 5:44 left in the half. Fortunately, UM went on a nice 9-2 run to end the half, leading 34-25. Michigan pushed the lead back up to 12 points (37-25) early in the 2nd half, but let the lead slip back down to 3 points (37-34) at the 15:59 mark. UM kept the lead, around 4-6 points, until the 5:49 mark, when Northwestern tied it up (52-52). The teams traded baskets down the stretch, and Northwestern tied it up at the buzzer (60-60). In overtime, UM went up by 4 early (67-63, with 2:59 left), fell behind late (70-67, with 1:02 left), and scored the last 5 points to win, 72-20. It wasn't a very impressive win, but it was an important one.

The Indiana game was close and exciting the whole time. The lead seesawed back and forth all game, with 12 ties and 18 lead changes. Neither team led by more than 6 points, and the game was tied with 46 seconds left, 69-69. IU had the ball, but UM stole it with 21 seconds left and held for the last shot. [Kameron Chatman](#) was the unlikely hero who buried a contested corner 3-pointer with 0.2 seconds left, and Michigan had the win they needed.

Even though Michigan was tired, playing their third game in three days, they hung with Purdue pretty well, EXCEPT for the first 3 minutes of each half. Purdue jumped out to an 8-0 lead in the first 2:42 of the 1st half, and led by 8 points at halftime (38-30). The start of the 2nd half was even worse, as Purdue started with a 9-0 run in the first 2:41, to make the deficit 17 points (47-30). That was the final margin of victory. Other than those two scoring runs, Michigan played Purdue dead even.

So, what did we learn about this season's UM team this week? We learned that they still had one more big win up their sleeves. We'll see how they do in the Big Dance.

Stats

The [stats for the Northwestern game](#) aren't very impressive. UM shot pretty poorly overall (22-for-58 = 37.9%), they shot 3-pointers pretty well (12-for-29 = 41.4%), and they shot free throws well (16-for-20 = 80.0%). They lost the rebounding battle (45-39) and the turnover battle (8-7). They won the game at the free throw line. Northwestern was only 9-for-12 at the line. Those 7 extra points made the difference.

The [stats for the Indiana game](#) are surprisingly mediocre for a win over a Top-10 team. UM shot pretty well overall (26-for-56 = 46.4%), they shot pretty poorly from 3-point range (6-for-21 = 28.6%), and they shot very well at the free throw line (14-for-16 = 87.5%). They

lost the rebounding battle again (37-25), but they won the turnover battle (10-15). UM won because IU shot even worse: 24-for-53 (45.3%) overall, 4-for-17 (23.5%) on 3-pointers, and 17-for-21 (81.0%) from the free throw line.

The [stats for the Purdue game](#) are sad. UM shot poorly across the board: 23-for-61 (37.7%) overall, 6-for-25 (24.0%) from 3-point range, and 7-for-12 (58.3%) from the free throw line. They got hammered on the boards (41-26), but they did win the turnover battle (8-12). It was ugly.

Individually, here's how the starters did this week:

- [Muhammad-Ali Abdur-Rahkman](#) – 14, 15, and 15 points. MAAR had a great tournament, and was the most consistent player this week.
- [Mark Donnal](#) – 2, 12, and 7 points. Donnal had foul trouble in all 3 games, with 5, 4, and 4 fouls.
- [Zak Irvin](#) – 19, 17, and 11 points. Irvin also had a great tournament, and hit the game-winning basket vs. Northwestern.
- [Duncan Robinson](#) – 21, 12, and 3 points. Robinson broke out of his late-season shooting slump vs. Northwestern (4-for-6 shooting 3-pointers), but started a new slump in the next 2 games (1-for-6 vs. IU, and 1-for-5 vs. Purdue).
- [Derrick Walton Jr.](#) – 2, 2, and 14. Walton had a baffling tournament. He shot 0-for-7 vs. Northwestern and 0-for-3 vs. Indiana, then scored 14 points vs. Purdue. He did set a new Big Ten Tournament record with 12 assists vs. Indiana.

The bench chipped in some important points this week:

- [Kameron Chatman](#) – 3, 5, and 4 points, including the amazing game-winning 3-pointer vs. Indiana.
- [Andrew Dakich](#) – 3, 0, and 0 points. Dakich took 1 shot in each game, making a 3-pointer vs. Northwestern.
- [Aubrey Dawkins](#) – 2, 0, and 2 points. The team really could have used a spark from Dawkins, especially in the Purdue game.
- [Ricky Doyle](#) – 6, 0, and 0 points. Doyle tweaked his ankle in the last second of the Northwestern game, and was hobbled in the other two games.
- [Moritz Wagner](#) – 0, 9, and 3 points. After not playing much in the Big Ten regular season, Wagner played a key role in the win over IU, including an unexpected 3-pointer.
- [DJ Wilson](#) – 0, DNP, and 0 points. Wilson only played 4 minutes total.

This Week

On to the Big Dance. As I mentioned above, Michigan is playing in a First Four game on Wednesday (03/16/2016, 9:10 p.m. EDT, truTV) vs. [Tulsa](#), in Dayton (OH). If they win that game, they'll move on to play as the #11 seed in the East regional vs. the #6 seed, [Notre Dame](#). That game is on Friday (03/18/2016) at 9:30 p.m. EDT in Brooklyn (NY), on CBS. Finally, if they win that game, they'll play the winner of the (#3 seed) [West Virginia](#) vs. (#14 seed) [Stephen F. Austin](#) game. That game is on Sunday (03/20/2016), time and TV information TBA.

The full NCAA Tournament bracket is [here](#).

Tulsa finished the regular season 20-10, and lost to Memphis in the 1st round of the AAC Tournament. They have a few good wins (Oklahoma State, UConn, and SMU), and a few bad losses (Little Rock, Oregon State, and Houston). They're not particularly tall, but they do have a lot of juniors and seniors on the team. It should be a good matchup, and UM needs to play their "A" game to win this one.

Notre Dame also finished the regular season 20-10, but they won one game in their conference (ACC) tournament. They beat Duke in overtime, then got hammered by North

Carolina. They have some impressive wins (at Duke, North Carolina, Louisville, and Duke in the ACC Tournament), and some not-so-impressive losses (Monmouth, Alabama, and Florida State). They don't have much height at all, but they do have a decent number of upperclassmen. They're a #6 seed for a reason, and UM will have their hands full if they get that far.

You're on your own checking out the rest of the teams that UM could potentially play.

Tune by on Wednesday (and hopefully, beyond), then check back next week to see what happened, and why.

Go Blue!