

Nothing But 'Net – 12/04/2019 - Special 20th Anniversary Edition

Today marks 20 years since I posted my first article on UMGoBlue.com. Back then, the Internet was a much different, much smaller place. The UM Club of Greater Phoenix had just transferred the MGoBlue.com domain over to the University for use as their official site, Phil had just grabbed UMGoBlue.com, and there were no other UM fan sites around. I held the ownership of the MGoBlog.com domain, which I eventually transferred to Brian Cook and his group, and UMHoops.com didn't exist.

In the last 20 years, I have posted 456 articles, about 22 per season. So much has happened in the last 20 years, and I decided to look back.

1999-2000

When I first started writing these articles, Phil hadn't done his marketing magic yet, so they weren't branded as "Nothing But 'Net". Also, instead of a weekly article, I wrote an article after each game. The first game I covered was Michigan's stirring 72-61 victory over Chattanooga on 12/04/1999. Brian Ellerbe was the head coach, and the team was pretty young, with 5 promising freshmen: Jamal Crawford, Kevin Gaines, Gavin Groninger, Lavell Blanchard, and Leland Anderson. Unfortunately, Crawford was forced into the NBA too early, Anderson left after one season, and Gaines left after two seasons. Blanchard was a star, and Groninger contributed, but losing Crawford and Gaines really hurt.

The Tommy Amaker Era

Tommy Amaker took over as head coach for the 2001-2002 season, and coached for 6 seasons. His teams were good-but-not-great, with an NIT Championship in 2004. He was a nice man, and a good coach, but he's better suited for Harvard than Michigan.

The John Beilein Era

[John Beilein](#) was named head coach for the 2007-2008 season, and he coached for 12 very successful seasons. He led Michigan to 2 Big Ten regular season championships (2012, 2014), 2 Big Ten Tournament championships (2017, 2018), and 2 Final Four appearances (2013, 2018). He was a very nice guy, and a very good coach. I was sorry to see him leave for the NBA.

The Juwan Howard Era

[Juwan Howard](#) took over as head coach for the (current) 2019-2020 season. We shall see how he does, but things look very good so far.

All NBN Teams

I've enjoyed watching Michigan basketball since my undergrad days (at Michigan, of course) starting in 1974. Along the way, I've certainly had some favorite players (Gary Grant and Butch Wade, among others), but I decided to list my picks for the best players over the last 20 years, the Nothing But 'Net (NBN) Era.

1st Team

C [Moe Wagner](#)
F [Glenn Robinson III](#)
F [Duncan Robinson](#)
G [Trey Burke](#)
G [Caris Levert](#)

2nd Team

C [Jon Teske](#)
F [Tim Hardaway, Jr.](#)
F [LaVell Blanchard](#)
G [Nik Stauskas](#)
G [Derrick Walton, Jr.](#)

3rd Team

C [Mitch McGary](#)
F [D.J. Wilson](#)
F [Isaiah Livers](#)
G [Daniel Horton](#)
G [Manny Harris](#)

Honorable Mention

C [Jordan Morgan](#), [Chris Hunter](#), [Graham Brown](#), [Courtney Sims](#)
F [Lester Abram](#), [Chris Young](#), [Bernard Robinson, Jr.](#), [Deshawn Sims](#), [Iggy Brazdeikis](#)
G [Dion Harris](#), [Zack Novak](#), [Darius Morris](#), [Zak Irvin](#), [Muhammad-Ali Abdur-Rahkman](#), [Jordan Poole](#), [Zavier Simpson](#)

Memories From The NBN Era

Favorite Players

The players listed above in "All NBN Teams" are the best players in that era, but some of my favorite players didn't necessarily make the lists. Here they are, in alphabetical order:

- [Spike Albrecht](#) – He wasn't the most talented player on the court, but he made the most out of the talent he had. I loved the way he'd hang back after a made UM basket and steal the opponent's inbound pass for another quick basket. He pulled that off several times.
- Graham Brown – OK, I'll admit it: I have a soft spot in my heart for undersized centers. Jordan Morgan, Chris Young, and Graham Brown all should have been forwards, but "played up" because the team needed them. They all had memorable games, despite going up against guys 3-4" taller than they were.
- Trey Burke – Probably the best Michigan player in the last 20 years, he was fun to watch. He played with joy and confidence.
- Jordan Morgan – Another "forward playing center to help his team". He was a nice guy, and a team leader.
- Zack Novak – Talk about "playing up": Zack was way undersized to play forward, but he did it anyway, and he did a great job. He was one of the great team leaders in the last 20 years.
- [Brent Petway](#) – Brent wasn't a very polished basketball player, but he was perhaps the most athletic Michigan player in the NBN era. He sure could dunk. I saw him do his cartwheel dunk twice in warm-ups; too bad it wasn't something he could do in a game.
- Glenn Robinson III – GR3 was another player with athletic ability to burn. His 360 dunk at Minnesota was an all-time highlight.
- Moe Wagner – Moe was one of the most exciting players in Michigan basketball history, because he could do things no other player had ever done: ball-handle and shoot 3-pointers like a guard, but do it in a 6'11" center's body. He was virtually unguardable. Ask Nick Ward.
- Chris Young – I listed Chris as a forward in my All NBN Teams list above, but he was forced into playing center for much of his Michigan career, and he gave it his all.

Favorite Moments

These are my favorite moments from the last 20 years, in chronological order.

- The win over (#4) Duke in Crisler in 2008.
- The win over (#15) UConn in Crisler in 2010.
- Trey Burke's incredible shot off the (very) high glass over Jared Sullinger at the end of the 2012 Ohio State game in Crisler to seal the win.
- Trey Burke's steal-and-stuff of Keith Appling in the last minute of the 2013 Michigan State game in Crisler to win the game.
- Trey Burke's buzzer-beater to send the 2013 NCAA Tournament game against Kansas into overtime, which UM eventually won.
- The 2013 Final Four in Atlanta. I went with my son, and we had a great time, despite the results of the championship game. Burke's block was clean.
- [Austin Hatch](#)'s free throw in the closing moments of the 2014 Coppin State game, his only point at Michigan. After what he went through to get to that point...
- The 2017 Michigan State game in Crisler, when Michigan was up 30 points at the first timeout of the second half, and the basketball band went up into the MSU cheering section (which wasn't doing much cheering) and serenaded them.
- The Illinois game in the 2017 Big Ten Tournament, when Michigan had to play in their practice uniforms, since their game uniforms were trapped in the plane that slid off the runway the day before. Heck, that whole tournament was a favorite memory.
- Jordan Poole's buzzer-beater to beat Houston in the 2018 NCAA Tournament.
- The 2018 Final Four in San Antonio. I went with my wife, and we had a great time, despite the results of the championship game.
- The 2019 Battle 4 Atlantis tournament in the Bahamas. I went with my wife and my son, and we had a great time, including 3 impressive wins for the championship.

The Future

I intend to keep writing these articles as long as Michigan plays basketball. They may not win them all, and they may have some down seasons, but I'll keep pulling for them and reporting what I see along the way.

Go Blue!