

Nothing But 'Net – Week #18 – 03/22/2021 – Win And Advance

The (#4) University of Michigan men's basketball team played one game this past week in the [NCAA Tournament](#), and they won it. The game was in West Lafayette, IN. [On Saturday \(03/20/2021\), they beat the #16 seed, Texas Southern, 82-66](#). The win raises Michigan's record to 21-4.

What Happened?

Michigan is the #1 seed in the East Region, and they were heavily favored to beat the #16 seed in the first-round game, which they did. These 1-16 games are almost always an easy win for the #1 seed, except for that one year when it wasn't (sorry, [Virginia](#)). Even the 2-15 games are usually pretty winnable for the #2 seed, except for this year (sorry, [Ohio State](#)). This year's tournament has lots of upsets, so the battle cry for the top seeds is "win and advance". That's what Michigan did. Sorry, [Illinois](#). And [Texas](#). And [West Virginia](#). And [Purdue](#). And [Virginia](#) (again). And [Oklahoma State](#). Those are all top 4 seeds that didn't make it to the Sweet Sixteen.

The Texas Southern game wasn't a dominating win, but it was a comfortable win. Michigan led the entire game, and kept the lead in the "comfortable" range the whole time. They led 7-0 early, and kept the lead in the 8-10 point range for the first 10 minutes, then pushed it into the 13-15 point range for the rest of the 1st half. They led by 18 points (42-24) at halftime, and pushed the lead up into the 20-22 point range for the first 13 minutes of the 2nd half. They seemed to lose interest at that point, and they let TSU creep as close as 12 points (73-61) with 3:40 to go, before closing out a 16-point win.

Stats

[The stats for the game](#) are solid. Michigan shot pretty well overall (26-for-54 = 48.1%), they shot 3-pointers pretty well (9-for-26 = 34.6%), and they shot free throws well enough (21-for-26 = 80.8%). They won the rebounding battle handily (38-28), but lost the turnover battle (14-10). They won this game with solid shooting and rebounding.

Who Started?

The starters for the game were [Eli Brooks](#), [Hunter Dickinson](#), [Brandon Johns, Jr.](#), [Mike Smith](#), and [Franz Wagner](#). [Isaiah Livers](#) is out "indefinitely" with a broken bone in his foot, so Johns started in his place. Michigan didn't miss Livers in this game, but they are likely to as the competition gets stronger.

Who Looked Good?

Smith was the high scorer for Michigan, with 18 points. He also did a nice job running the offense, with 5 assists.

Dickinson had a good game, with 16 points on 6-for-7 shooting. On the down side, he only played 24 minutes, due to foul trouble, and he fouled out.

Brooks had 11 points, including 3-for-6 shooting from 3-point range, along with 5 assists.

Johns also had 11 points. He filled in nicely for Livers.

Wagner almost hit double figures, with 9 points. He also had 9 rebounds and 6 assists.

[Austin Davis](#) did a good job spelling Dickinson, with 7 points. However, he had foul trouble of his own, with 4 fouls in 10 minutes. Yikes.

[Zeb Jackson](#) had his best game to date as a Wolverine, with 6 points in 8 quality minutes of action. He hit his first two shot attempts, both 3-pointers. He looked cool and confident out there.

[Terrance Williams II](#) looked pretty good out there, with 4 points and 3 rebounds.

Who Looked Not-So-Good?

[Chaundee Brown, Jr.](#) played 16 minutes, took one shot, and missed it. Zero points. He is one of the key players who needs to step up to help replace Livers, and he didn't do it in this game.

Who Else Played?

No one else played.

Who Didn't Play?

Two of the scholarship players who aren't part of the main rotation ([Jace Howard](#) and [Adrien Nuñez](#)) didn't play.

None of the scout team players ([C.J. Baird](#), [Jaron Faulds](#), [Rico Ozuna-Harrison](#), [Brandon Wade](#), and [Luke Wilson](#)) played.

What Does It Mean?

Michigan is still alive in the Big Dance, which is all you can ask. Six of the nine Big Ten teams in the field have already been eliminated:

- Michigan State (11-seed) lost to UCLA (11-seed) in a "First Four" game on Thursday
- Ohio State (2-seed) lost to Oral Roberts (15-seed) in a 1st round game on Friday
- Purdue (4-seed) lost to North Texas (13-seed) in a 1st round game on Friday
- Illinois (1-seed) lost to Loyola-Chicago (8-seed) in a 2nd round game on Sunday
- Wisconsin (9-seed) lost to Baylor (1-seed) in a 2nd round game on Sunday
- Rutgers (10-seed) lost to Houston (2-seed) in a 2nd round game on Sunday

That leaves only three teams from the Big Ten left alive: Michigan (1-seed), Iowa (2-seed), and Maryland (10-seed). They all have 2nd round games on Monday.

Of those six losses by the Big Ten teams, one of them was a "toss up" (MSU), two of them were expected (Wisconsin and Rutgers), and three of them were big upsets (OSU, Purdue, and Illinois). The Big Ten hasn't looked very good in this year's tournament, but there's still hope.

What's Next?

This week, Michigan is scheduled to continue play in the NCAA Tournament, in Indianapolis. As mentioned above, they play on Monday (03/22/2021, 7:10 p.m. EDT, CBS) vs. the #8 seed ([LSU](#)). If they win that game, they'll move on to the Sweet Sixteen, and play the winner of the #4 seed (Florida State) vs. #5 seed (Colorado) game on either Saturday (03/27/2021) or Sunday. The full bracket is [here](#).

LSU won their 1st round game vs. the #9 seed (St. Bonaventure) 76-61. Their record is 19-9, with quality wins over Arkansas, (#16) Tennessee, Missouri, and (#8) Arkansas, and less-than-impressive losses to St. Louis, Kentucky, and Georgia. They don't have any superstars on their roster, but they do have decent height: a 6'10" guy and a 6'11" guy. They play fast and they score a lot, but they don't play much defense. This will be a serious challenge for Michigan, especially in a Big Dance full of upsets. All Michigan needs to do is win and advance.

Check back next week to see what happened, and why.

Go Blue!