

Nothing But 'Net – Week #22 – 03/27/2023 – Season Wrap-up, Final Grades, And Looking Ahead

The University of Michigan men's basketball team is done for the 2022-2023 season, and the only way to describe it is "disappointing". Michigan ended up with a final record of 18-16 (11-9 in Big Ten). They finished tied for 5th place in the league standings, missed the NCAA Tournament, and lost in the 2nd round of the NIT.

Season Wrap-up

Michigan started the season ranked #22 in the preseason AP poll, and big things were expected of them. Certainly, they were expected to contend for the Big Ten title and make it to the NCAA Tournament. That's not how things worked out.

There were 31 regular season games and 3 post-season games, but one game ruined the whole season: the [Central Michigan game in Crisler Arena on 12/29/2022](#). Michigan played like they expected to win by just showing up, and by the time they realized that they could actually lose to a lower-division MAC team in their own arena, it was too late. They lost 63-61, and the season was in tatters. It really didn't matter much how many quality wins they got the rest of the season, that one horrible loss kept them out of the NCAA Tournament.

The theme for that game, and the rest of the season, was "keep the game close, and lose in the last 2 minutes". Michigan lost to the following 13 teams by 6 points or less, or in overtime:

- 11/29/2022 – Home vs. [\(#3\) Virginia: 70-68](#)
- 12/04/2022 – Neutral site vs. [\(#19\) Kentucky: 73-69](#)
- 12/21/2022 – Neutral site vs. [North Carolina: 80-76](#)
- 12/29/2022 – Home vs. [Central Michigan: 63-61](#)
- 01/07/2023 – At [Michigan State: 59-53](#)
- 01/12/2023 – At [Iowa: 93-84 \(overtime\)](#)
- 01/19/2023 – At [Maryland: 64-58](#)
- 01/26/2023 – Home vs. [\(#1\) Purdue: 75-70](#)
- 02/11/2023 – Home vs. [\(#18\) Indiana: 62-61](#)
- 02/14/2023 – At [Wisconsin: 64-59](#)
- 03/02/2023 – At [Illinois: 91-87 \(double overtime\)](#)
- 03/05/2023 – At [\(#15\) Indiana: 75-73 \(overtime\)](#)
- 03/18/2023 – At [Vanderbilt: 66-65](#) (NIT)

They could have won every one of those games, but they managed to lose them all, often in creative new ways. They often had double-digit leads late in the game. It was heartbreaking.

On the positive side, Michigan did have 9 impressive wins:

- 11/16/2022 – Neutral site vs. [Pittsburgh: 91-60](#)
- 01/01/2023 – Home vs. [Maryland: 81-46](#)
- 01/04/2023 – Home vs. [Penn State: 79-69](#)
- 01/15/2023 – Home vs. [Northwestern: 85-78](#)
- 02/02/2023 – At [Northwestern: 68-51](#)
- 02/18/2023 – Home vs. [Michigan State: 84-72](#)
- 02/23/2023 – At [Rutgers: 58-45](#)
- 02/26/2023 – Home vs. [Wisconsin: 87-79 \(overtime\)](#)
- 03/14/2023 – Home vs. [Toledo: 90-80](#) (NIT)

Most of those wins were against teams that eventually made the NCAA Tournament, and several of them were by impressive margins (Pitt, Maryland, Northwestern, and MSU).

The remaining 12 games were a mixed bag of blowout losses (3) and unimpressive wins over lesser opponents (9):

- 11/07/2022 (Win) – Home vs. [Purdue-Fort Wayne: 75-56](#)
- 11/11/2022 (Win) – Neutral site vs. [Eastern Michigan: 88-83](#)
- 11/17/2022 (Loss) – Neutral site vs. [Arizona State: 87-62](#)
- 11/20/2022 (Win) – Home vs. [Ohio: 70-66 \(overtime\)](#)
- 11/23/2022 (Win) – Home vs. [Jackson State: 78-68](#)
- 12/08/2022 (Win) – At [Minnesota: 90-75](#)
- 12/17/2022 (Win) – Home vs. [Lipscomb: 83-75](#)
- 01/22/2023 (Win) – Home vs. [Minnesota: 60-56](#)
- 01/29/2023 (Loss) – At [Penn State: 83-61](#)
- 02/05/2023 (Win) – Home vs. [Ohio State: 77-69](#)
- 02/08/2023 (Win) – Home vs. [Nebraska: 93-72](#)
- 03/09/2023 (Loss) – Neutral site vs. [Rutgers: 62-50](#) (Big Ten Tournament)

All of these losses were away from Crisler, and two of the three were to NCAA Tournament teams (Arizona State and Penn State).

Looking at the complete season, the real story was the CMU loss and all the close losses in the last 2 minutes. That's where the season went down the drain.

Stats

[The season stats](#) show that Michigan shot decently overall (898-for-1884 = 45.0%), they shot 3-pointers fairly well (261-for-744 = 35.1%), and they shot free throws reasonably well (437-for-615 = 71.1%). They barely won the rebounding battle for the season (1248-1200), but they lost the turnover battle (356-338). These are not very impressive stats.

Here are the individual leaders this season.

Scoring:

1. Hunter Dickinson: 629 points
2. Kobe Bufkin: 462 points
3. Jett Howard: 412 points
4. Dug McDaniel: 294 points

Points per game:

1. Hunter Dickinson: 18.5 points/game
2. Jett Howard: 14.2 points/game
3. Kobe Bufkin: 14.0 points/game
4. Dug McDaniel: 8.6 points/game

Overall shooting percentage (minimum 100 attempts):

1. Hunter Dickinson: 56.0%
2. Kobe Bufkin: 48.2%
3. Jett Howard: 41.4%
4. Joey Baker: 39.3%

3-point shooting percentage (minimum 50 attempts):

1. Hunter Dickinson: 42.1%
2. Joey Baker: 39.1%
3. Jett Howard: 36.8%
4. Kobe Bufkin: 35.5%

Free throw shooting percentage (minimum 50 attempts):

1. Kobe Bufkin: 84.9%
2. Jett Howard: 80.0%
3. Dug McDaniel: 76.8%
4. Terrance Williams II: 75.0%

Rebounding:

1. Hunter Dickinson: 307
2. Terrance Williams II: 188
3. Kobe Bufkin: 124
4. Tarris Reed, Jr: 132

Assists:

1. Dug McDaniel: 122
2. Kobe Bufkin: 96
3. Jett Howard: 59
4. Hunter Dickinson: 50

Final Grades

Here are the final grades for this season's team, with mid-term grades listed first.

Freshman Eligibility

- [Isaiah Barnes](#) (B-/C) – Isaiah was granted a medical redshirt for last season, so he had freshman eligibility this season. He played in 15 games, and scored 16 points. He looked pretty good when he was out there, but he had trouble getting in the game. I wasn't surprised when he announced that he was entering the transfer portal.
- [Gregg Glenn III](#) (C/Inc.) – Gregg didn't play much (4 games, 11 minutes), and he didn't score much (6 points). He didn't look very comfortable out there in his limited action. I won't be surprised if he hits the transfer portal looking for more playing time.
- [Jett Howard](#) (A-/B+) – As you can see above, Jett was 2nd or 3rd in most statistical categories. He had a good freshman season, but not great. However, the NBA must see his potential, because he's entering the NBA Draft, and most mock drafts show him getting drafted in the 1st round. The funny thing is, Michigan seemed to play better when he was on the sidelines injured. It must have been a chemistry thing.
- [Youssef Khayat](#) (C+/C+) – Youssef played in 9 games, and even started one, and he scored 12 points. He plays hard and fast, but not always under control. He has potential, but he needs a lot of coaching and game experience.
- [Dug McDaniel](#) (B+/A-) – Dug went from a luxury to a necessity overnight when the main point guard (Jaelin Llewellyn) went down with a season-ending knee injury in Game #8 (Kentucky). He hadn't done much up until that point, but once he was a starter, he got better every game. You see his name up there in most of the statistical categories, and he is only going to get better. He's the fastest player on the team, and he's fearless out there.
- [Tarris Reed, Jr.](#) (B/B) – Tarris was mostly used as a defensive specialist who occasionally chipped in some points. He played in all 34 games, and he scored 116 points and grabbed 132 rebounds. He's another player who improved almost every game.
- [Jackson Selvala](#) (Inc./Inc.) – Jackson was a team manager who walked on as a player. He was part of the practice squad. He played in 4 games for a total of 7 minutes, and he missed his only shot attempt of the season.

- [Will Tschetter](#) (B-/C+) – Will was voluntarily redshirted last season, so he had freshman eligibility this season. He played in 27 games, and started 8 of them. He scored 63 points. He played solid defense, but he played a little too out-of-control sometimes on offense, making silly turnovers. He also committed too many silly fouls. He has the potential to improve and contribute going forward.

Sophomore Eligibility

- [Kobe Bufkin](#) (A-/A-) – Kobe started every game except the miserable Vanderbilt game, and he played very well. You can see his name all over the stats above. He acted as point guard when McDaniel wasn't out there, and he did a good job. He is being mentioned as another player who might enter the NBA Draft.
- [Ian Burns](#) (Inc./Inc.) – Ian was on the practice squad, and only played in 3 games for 8 minutes, and he missed his only shot attempt of the season.
- [Cooper Smith](#) (Inc./Inc.) – Cooper was on the practice squad, and only played in 4 games for 7 minutes, and missed his only shot attempt of the season.

Junior Eligibility

- [Hunter Dickinson](#) (A-/A) – Hunter is an enigma. When he gets fired up, he's the best player on the court, but he seems to just drift through the game much of the time. Maybe it's just his "game face", but he often looks and acts disinterested or bored out there. Still, he led the team in scoring, shooting percentage, rebounding, and blocked shots. If only we could get him to play "fired up" more often...
- [Jace Howard](#) (C/C) – Jace found a role as a defensive specialist. He played in 30 games, but only scored 37 points. He occasionally tossed in 3-pointer; he was 7-for-17 from deep this season.
- [Terrance Williams II](#) (C-/D) – Terrance was the weak link on the team this season. He played in 32 games, and started 26 of them, and he's a good defender and rebounder, but he didn't help much on the offensive end: 6.1 points/game. He singlehandedly lost the Vanderbilt game.

Senior Eligibility

- [Joey Baker](#) (B-/B) – Joey played in all 34 games, and started 5 of them, but he only averaged 5.7 points/game. His role was "3 and D", and he did pretty well shooting 3's: tied for 2nd on the team in made 3-pointers (43), shooting 39.1% from deep. His problem was consistency. He had 7 games where he hit double figures, but 9 games where he didn't make a basket (maybe a few free throws...).
- [Jaelin Llewellyn](#) (B-/Inc.) – Jaelin did pretty well in the 8 games that he played before he suffered a season-ending knee injury. He averaged 7.0 points/game, and had 22 assists against only 9 turnovers. It's a shame about his injury.

Looking Ahead

It's almost pointless to try to predict who's going to be on the team next season. Between the transfer portal and the NBA Draft, half the team could be gone by then. At this point, only two players have definitively said they are leaving: Isaiah Barnes (transfer portal) and Jett Howard (NBA Draft). There's a rumor that Kobe Bufkin might also enter the NBA Draft, and it wouldn't surprise me if Gregg Glenn III decided to transfer to get some playing time. Will anyone else leave over the summer? Who knows?

So, what about Hunter Dickinson? His best season was probably his freshman season, but he's been the heart and soul of the team all 3 years. Will he come back for his senior season? On

the one hand, he doesn't appear to be getting much NBA interest, but some team might take a chance on him late in the 2nd round of the draft. On the other hand, he seems to be enjoying his college experience, and Michigan would love to have him back for another year. So, who knows?

What about the two grad student transfer players, Joey Baker and Jaelin Llewellyn? In theory, Baker should be done, but he has applied for a waiver for a 6th year of eligibility. If he is granted the waiver, and if he decides to stay at Michigan, would Michigan still want him? Probably. He was wildly unpredictable, but he showed what he could do in the Toledo game, with 21 points. Llewellyn is another player who would appear to be out of eligibility, but he might be granted a medical redshirt. It was telling that he didn't participate in the Senior Day festivities, only Baker did. Once again, if he were given another season of eligibility, would he decide to stay at Michigan? And, if he wanted to stay, would Michigan want him? Where would he fit in with the rapid development of Dug McDaniel? So many possibilities!

At this point, Michigan has two players signed up to enter the program as incoming freshmen next season:

- [Papa Kante](#) (6'10", 215 pounds, C) – Papa is a 4-star center, and he looks like a good, solid player, but his scouting reports say that he needs some coaching. If he gets time to develop behind Dickinson and Reed, he could be the center of the future.
- [George Washington III](#) (6'2", 165 pounds, G) – George is a 4-star combo guard, with emphasis on shooting guard more than point guard. He's a prolific scorer in high school, and he could add some much needed firepower to Michigan's ailing half-court offense.

In the age of the transfer portal, it seems obvious that [Coach Howard](#) is going to go shopping this off-season. Regardless of who stays and who leaves, Michigan desperately needs more outside shooters, either as guards or wings. If Dickinson and Reed both stay, and Kante is used as a center, that position is all set. If Michigan has both McDaniel and Llewellyn as point guards, that position is all set. If Bufkin comes back, that's one outside shooter, but with Jett Howard leaving and Baker being so unpredictable, Michigan needs at least two more pure shooters. Maybe Washington will be one of them, but it's risky counting on a freshman too much.

Check back in mid-October for the start of next season.

Go Blue!