

Nothing But 'Net – Week #23 – 03/17/2025 – Big Ten Tournament Champions!

The (#22) University of Michigan men's basketball team played three games as the #3 seed in the [Big Ten Tournament](#) in Indianapolis this past week, and they won all three of them, and the Big Ten Tournament Championship! [On Friday \(03/14/2025\), they beat the #6 seed \(#20\) Purdue 86-68](#), [on Saturday \(03/15/2025\), they beat the #2 seed \(#11\) Maryland 81-80](#), and [on Sunday \(03/16/2025\), they beat the #5 seed \(#18\) Wisconsin 59-53](#). Michigan's record is now 25-9 (14-6 in Big Ten).

What Happened?

Wow, what an exciting long weekend in Indianapolis! Michigan staggered into the Big Ten Tournament on a 3-game losing streak, with no one giving them much of a chance of winning more than one game, but they surprised everyone (including me) by winning it all. They dominated Purdue in Friday's game, then hung in on Saturday and Sunday to win both games in the final minute. In three days, they beat three teams ranked ahead of them in the polls. It was awesome.

Game Flow

The Purdue game started out ugly, with Michigan missing their first 3 shots, and Purdue jumping out to a quick 6-0 lead at the 18:20 mark. That was the high point for Purdue. Michigan went on a great 12-0 run, to lead 12-6 with 15:30 to go, and they never trailed again. They pushed their lead as high as 10 points in the 1st half, and generally kept it around 4-6 points for the rest of the half. They led by 4 points (40-36) at halftime.

The 2nd half was wonderful. Michigan started the half with a 9-3 run to push their lead back up to 10 points (49-39) at the 16:25 mark. They let Purdue creep back within 7 points, but they answered that run with one of their own, to push their lead up to 12 points (57-45) with 13:53 to go. At this point, the game was over. Michigan held off every Purdue run, and kept the lead around 14-16 points the rest of the way, winning by 18 points. It was a fun, low-stress game. It was great to see Michigan return to the form they showed in the first half of the season.

The Maryland game was close and tense at the beginning, with lots of ties and lead changes in the first 10 minutes. With 10:18 left in the half, Maryland led 18-16. Less than 30 seconds later, they had pushed the lead up to 7 points (23-16) with 9:43 to go. It took a while, but Michigan slowly clawed their way back, and reclaimed the lead, 27-25, at the 5:04 mark. Maryland answered, and went back on top (32-29) with 3:44 to go. They were still up by 3 points (34-31) with 2:00 left, when Michigan started their big run. Michigan closed the half with a 7-0 run, to lead 38-34 at halftime, then they kept the run going after halftime, scoring the first 11 points to push their lead to 15 points, 49-34. It looked like Maryland was done, but not so fast. They kept chipping away at Michigan's big lead, and got it down to 10 points (49-39), then 5 points (49-44), before Michigan got going again. They pushed the lead back up to 11 points (61-50) at the 11:42 mark, and it looked like they had weathered the storm. Nope. Maryland went on a long, grinding 14-0 run to reclaim the lead (64-61) with 7:48 left. The rest of the game was close and tense again, with lots of ties and lead changes. Neither team got more than 3 points ahead the rest of the way. The last minute was very exciting. The score was tied (76-76) with 43 seconds left, then Michigan went up by 3 points (79-76) with 28 seconds to go. Maryland made a basket and 2 free throws to lead by 1 point (80-79) with 5 seconds left, and then it was hero time for [Tre Donaldson](#). He took the inbounds pass after a made free throw by Maryland and went 94 feet for the winning layup with 0.4 seconds left. It was amazing!

When the Big Ten Tournament bracket was announced last week, it sure looked like Michigan was going to have to get by Michigan State in the championship game if they wanted to win it all, but Wisconsin took care of that by upsetting the Spartans 77-74 on Saturday. Michigan had already beaten Wisconsin 67-64 in Madison way back on December 3rd, 2024, but that was a long time ago. Michigan played very well on Friday in their first game of the

tournament vs. Purdue, when they were well-rested, but they looked a little tired vs. Maryland on Saturday. Would they have enough gas left in the tank to beat Wisconsin? It turns out: yes, but just barely.

The Wisconsin game was a low-scoring, ugly affair, with both teams looking tired and off their game. Both teams shot poorly overall (22.1% for Wisconsin, 32.2% for Michigan) and from deep (17.9% for Wisconsin, 27.3% for Michigan). The game started out close and slow, with a few ties and lead changes. It was all tied up 7-7 at the 14:35 mark, when Michigan started to pull away. They opened up a 5-point lead (12-7) with 11:46 to go, but it didn't last. Wisconsin went ahead 13-12 with 9:18 left, and the rest of the half was a bunch of ties and lead changes. With 3:16 to go, it was tied up again, 21-21, and Wisconsin scored the only 2 points in the last 3:16 to lead 23-21 at halftime.

The 2nd half had a little more scoring. Wisconsin scored the first 6 points of the half, and pushed their lead to 29-21 at the 16:37 mark. In such a slow, low-scoring game, an 8 point lead is huge, and things weren't looking good for Michigan. They looked even worse 3 minutes later, when Wisconsin went up by 11 points, 38-27, with 13:11 to go. Fortunately, Michigan woke up and rattled off a 7-0 run to get back in the game, 38-34, with 11:21 left. Wisconsin kept their lead in the 4-6 point range for the next 4 minutes, and it was 45-41 at the 7:26 mark. Michigan finally erased the deficit completely (45-45) with 5:50 to go, and finally got ahead (53-51) with 1:54 left. Wisconsin tied it up 53-53, and Michigan scored the last 6 points to win 59-53. It was a gritty, gutty win.

Stats

[The stats for the Purdue game](#) were solid. Michigan shot well overall (30-for-58 = 51.7%), they shot 3-pointers pretty well (8-for-26 = 30.8%), and they shot free throws very well (18-for-22 = 81.8%). They won the rebounding battle (40-34), but they barely lost the turnover battle (6-5). They won this game with solid shooting and nice, low turnovers.

[The stats for the Maryland game](#) were very good. Michigan shot pretty well overall (31-for-66 = 47.0%), they shot 3-pointers well (7-for-18 = 38.9%), and they were excellent at the free throw line (12-for-13 = 92.3%). They crushed Maryland on the boards (47-18), but they lost the turnover battle badly (19-6). They won this game with great shooting and rebounding, but they made it close with 19 turnovers. In 51 years of following Michigan basketball, I can never remember rebounding numbers like that.

[The stats for the Wisconsin game](#) were miserable, the worst I can remember for a winning effort. Michigan shot terribly overall (19-for-59 = 32.2%), they shot 3-pointers terribly (9-for-33 = 27.3%), but they were excellent at the free throw line again (12-for-13 = 92.3%). They lost the rebounding battle (46-40) and the turnover battle (8-6). They won this game by shooting better than Wisconsin, even if it was bad shooting.

Who Started?

The starters for all three games were [Nimari Burnett](#), [Tre Donaldson](#), [Vladislav Goldin](#), [Rubin Jones](#), and [Danny Wolf](#).

Who Looked Good?

Goldin was the star of the tournament, with double figures in all 3 games (15, 25, and 11 points). He was the 2nd leading scorer for Michigan in the Purdue game, the leading scorer in the Maryland game, and tied for the leading scorer in the Wisconsin game. He also grabbed 8, 10, and 5 rebounds, giving him a double-double in the Maryland game. He was great.

Donaldson was the hero of the Maryland game, as described above, and he hit double figures in all 3 games (13, 12, and 11 points). He was also on fire with assists: 5, 9, and 8.

Wolf hit double figures in two of the three games, with 18, 21, and 8 points. He was also the leading rebounder in all three games, with double-digit rebounds in two of the three games: 11, 14, and 8, giving him two double-doubles.

Burnett had a good tournament, with 7, 10, and 8 points.

Jones had a decent tournament, with 8, 2, and 5 points.

[Roddy Gayle Jr.](#) chipped in 11, 9, and 2 points off the bench this week.

[Will Tschetter](#) chipped in 8, 2, and 6 points off the bench this week.

[L.J. Cason](#) chipped in 6, 0, and 8 points off the bench this week.

Who Looked Not-So-Good?

No one looked not-so-good this week.

Who Else Played?

[Phat Phat Brooks](#) played in the final minute of the Purdue game, but didn't attempt a shot.

[Ian Burns](#) played in the final minute of the Purdue game, but didn't attempt a shot.

[Harrison Hochberg](#) played in the final minute of the Purdue game, but didn't attempt a shot.

Who Didn't Play?

[Sam Walters](#) didn't play again this week. He's still recovering from a lower back injury.

[Jace Howard](#) and [Justin Pippen](#) were the other scholarship players who didn't play this week.

None of the other Scout Team players played this week: [Howard Eisley Jr.](#) and [Charlie May](#).

What Does It Mean?

Winning the Big Ten Tournament Championship is huge for this team. They limped through the last couple weeks of the regular season, scratching out unimpressive wins over Nebraska and Rutgers, while getting blasted by Michigan State (twice), Illinois, and Maryland. They looked like they were through for the season, but a few days rest really revived them.

Since they won the Big Ten Tournament, they got the Big Ten's automatic berth in the [NCAA Tournament](#). They got shafted a little bit on the seed (#5) and the region (South), but they're in. It's a little galling to see teams that Michigan finished ahead of or tied with in the regular season standings and beat in the Big Ten Tournament get better seeds than they did: Maryland = 4-seed, Wisconsin = 3-seed, and Purdue = 4-seed. Michigan: the Rodney Dangerfield of basketball teams ("We get no respect").

What's Next?

This week, Michigan plays in the NCAA Tournament, as the #5 seed in the South Region. They open play against the #12 seed, U.C. San Diego, on Thursday (03/20/2025, 10:00 p.m. EDT, TBS) in Denver, CO. If they win that game, they play the winner of the (#4 seed) Texas A&M vs. (#13 seed) Yale game on Saturday.

[U.C. San Diego](#) is currently 30-4 (18-2 in Big West). They won the Big West Tournament, giving them the automatic berth into the NCAA Tournament. They have no impressive wins, and unimpressive losses to San Diego State, Seattle U, U.C. Irvine, and U.C. Riverside. They don't have any noteworthy players, and they don't have much height: one 6'10" player. This

is a team that Michigan should be able to beat, but they need to play the way they did this past week, not like they did the last couple weeks of the regular season.

Check back next week to find out what happened and why.

Go Blue!