

Nothing But 'Net – Week #24 – 03/24/2025 – Sweet!

The (#22) University of Michigan men's basketball team played two games as the #5 seed in the South Region of the [NCAA Tournament](#) in Denver this past week, and they won both of them. [On Thursday \(03/20/2025\), they beat the #12 seed U.C. San Diego 68-65](#), then [on Saturday \(03/22/2025\), they beat the #4 seed \(#19\) Texas A&M 91-79](#). Michigan's record is now 27-9 (14-6 in Big Ten).

What Happened?

Sweet! Actually, Sweet 16! By winning both games this week, Michigan is advancing to the Sweet 16. This is a Really Big Deal. After a miserable 8-24 season last year, no one expected Michigan to bounce back this fast and this far. Since the NCAA Tournament expanded to establish the Sweet 16 as it exists today (1975), Michigan is the first team to go from a 24-loss season to the Sweet 16 the next season. Amazing.

Both games were close and exciting, and Michigan won both games in the final minutes.

Game Flow

The UCSD game started out with a bang for Michigan. Before the first media timeout, Michigan had raced out to a 10-0 lead. UCSD didn't score until the 14:55 mark, to make it 10-2. Michigan kept their lead in the 7-9 point range, and finally pushed it over 10 points (20-8) with 10:20 to go. They kept the lead in the 10-12 point range, and finally pushed it up to 14 points (41-27) at halftime. Michigan started the 2nd half with a free throw to push their lead to 15 points (42-27) at the 19:11 mark, and that was the high point. The rest of the game was a slow, grinding comeback by UCSD. They went on a 12-0 run to get within 3 points (42-39) with 16:46 to go, and they got within 1 point (45-44) with 14:40 left. Michigan responded, and pushed the lead back up to 7 points (51-44) at the 12:19 mark, then up to 10 points (56-46) with 11:10 to go. UCSD kept grinding, and they tied it up (63-63) with 3:05 left, and went ahead (65-63) with 2:29 to go. Look at the final score (68-65); Michigan scored the last 5 points to win by 3. It was a gritty win.

Michigan was an underdog in the Texas A&M game, both by seeding (#5 vs. #4) and according to Las Vegas. The game started out close and exciting, with several ties and lead changes. It was all tied up (10-10) at the 14:07 mark, when Michigan opened up a small lead, 17-11, with 12:55 to go. TAMU tied it up (17-17) with 11:34 to go, then they went ahead for a while. They were up 6 points (29-23) with 6:17 left in the half, when Michigan went on a mini-run to tie it up (31-31) with 4:16 to go. Michigan led by 1 point (35-34) at the 2:18 mark, but TAMU scored the last 5 points of the half to lead 39-34 at halftime.

The 2nd half didn't look very promising for Michigan. TAMU expanded their lead to 9 points (48-39) at the 16:51 mark, then 10 points (51-41) with 15:46 to go. They kept their lead around 8-10 points for the next couple minutes, and they were still up 8 points (60-52) with 13:04 left. Michigan managed to get the deficit down to 4 points (61-57) with 12:07 to go, then 2 points (63-61) at the 10:18 mark. TAMU pushed their lead back up to 6 points (67-61), and Michigan managed to get back within a point (67-66) at the 8:11 mark. UM finally caught up and went ahead (71-70) with 6:08 left, then pushed the lead to 5 points (75-70) with 5:17 to go. They never trailed again. TAMU got as close as 3 points (75-72) at the 4:59 mark, but Michigan went on a crucial 6-0 run to put the game out of reach, 81-72, with 3:43 left. TAMU got as close as 3 points (82-79) with 1:29 to go, but UM closed the game with a 9-0 run to win going away.

Stats

[The stats for the UCSD game](#) were decent. Michigan shot decently overall (24-for-57 = 42.1%), they shot 3-pointers pretty well (9-for-27 = 33.3%), but they shot free throws poorly (11-for-20 = 55.0%). They won the rebounding battle (43-37), but they lost the turnover

battle (14-8). They won this game with decent shooting and rebounding, but they almost lost it with poor free-throw shooting and turnovers.

[The stats for the TAMU game](#) were also just decent. Michigan shot decently overall (28-for-65 = 43.1%), they shot 3-pointers decently (6-for-22 = 27.3%), and they shot free throws well (29-for-36 = 80.6%). They won the rebounding battle (48-39), but they barely lost the turnover battle (9-8). They won this game with free throws and rebounding. They scored 29 points at the free throw line!

Who Started?

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

Who Looked Good?

We have an unexpected star this week: [Roddy Gayle Jr.](#) He wasn't the leading scorer in the UCSD game, but he did hit double figures, with 11 points off the bench. He was the big star and the leading scorer in the TAMU game, with a season-high 26 points. Remember when Roddy missed 16 3-point attempts in a row back in February? Well, he finally found his shot, and just in time. He shot 1-for-3 from deep vs. UCSD, and 4-for-6 vs. TAMU. He was great.

Goldin was the leading scorer in the UCSD game, with 14 points, and he was almost the leading scorer in the TAMU game, with 23 points. He also had 12 rebounds vs. TAMU, for a big double-double. He was great.

Donaldson hit double figures (12) vs. UCSD, and almost hit double figures (8) vs. TAMU. He did a good job running the offense.

Wolf hit double figures (14) vs. TAMU, and almost hit double figures (9) vs. UCSD. He also had 11 and 9 rebounds. He did his part.

[L.J. Cason](#) had a good week, with 6 points vs. UCSD and 11 points vs. TAMU. He looked very calm and confident out there on a big stage.

[Will Tschetter](#) chipped in 7 and 2 points off the bench this week.

Who Looked Not-So-Good?

Burnett had one decent game (6 points vs. UCSD) and one terrible game (0 points vs. TAMU).

Jones had one lousy game (3 points vs. UCSD) and one decent game (7 points vs. TAMU).

Who Else Played?

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

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

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

[Charlie May](#) played in the final minute of the TAMU 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.

[Howard Easley Jr.](#) was the only Scout Team player who didn't play this week.

What Does It Mean?

Getting to the Sweet 16 is huge for this team. This far exceeds most people's expectations, including mine. I was going to be happy if Michigan finished in the top half of the Big Ten standings, won a game in the Big Ten Tournament, and made it to the NCAA Tournament. I was happy when they came in 2nd in the Big Ten standings, very happy when they won the Big Ten Tournament, and extremely happy when they won two games in the NCAA Tournament and made it to the Sweet 16. As my son said, they're playing with "house money".

What's Next?

This week, Michigan continues play in the NCAA Tournament, as the #5 seed in the South Region. Play shifts from Denver to Atlanta, where Michigan plays the #1 seed, (#4) Auburn, on Friday (03/28/2025, 9:39 p.m., CBS). If they win that game, they play the winner of the (#2 seed) Michigan State vs. (#6 seed) Mississippi game on Sunday.

[Auburn](#) is currently 30-5 (15-3 in SEC), with impressive wins over (#4) Houston, (#5) Iowa State, (#12) North Carolina, Memphis, (#16) Purdue, Missouri, (#23) Georgia, (#6) Tennessee, (#2) Alabama, (#17) Kentucky, and (#8) Mississippi. They have no bad losses. They don't have any noteworthy players, and they don't have much height: a 6'10" player (their leading scorer) and a 6'11" player who averages 5 points/game. Look at that list of impressive wins; Auburn is legit. Are they unbeatable? No, Texas A&M beat them, and Michigan just beat Texas A&M. Can Michigan beat them? Sure, but they will need to play their best game of the season to do it. They will need to shoot 3-pointers like they did in the beginning of January, and they will need to keep their turnovers down. If Michigan can stay close with 4 minutes to go, they stand a chance against any team in the country.

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

Go Blue!