

## **Nothing But 'Net – Week #22 – 03/09/2026 – Finishing Strong**

The (#3) University of Michigan men's basketball team played two games this past week, and they won both of them. [On Thursday \(03/05/2026\), they won at Iowa 71-68](#), then [on Sunday \(03/08/2026\), they beat \(#8\) Michigan State 90-80](#) in Crisler Arena. Michigan's final regular season record is 29-2 (19-1 in Big Ten).

### **What Happened?**

Michigan finished both games strong, and finished the regular season strong as well. In the Iowa game, the score was tied in the last minute, and Michigan finished strong to seal the victory. In the MSU game, State was within 3 points with less than 4 minutes to go, and Michigan finished very strong to win comfortably. It was a great finish to the regular season. Michigan had already locked up the outright regular season Big Ten championship last week when they beat Illinois, but they didn't want to endanger their potential #1 seed in the NCAA Tournament by losing either of the two remaining regular season games. They took care of business.

The win over MSU gave Michigan a rare season sweep of the Spartans, and also gave them their 19<sup>th</sup> Big Ten win, a new conference record. It also gave Michigan a 4-game lead over the 2<sup>nd</sup> place teams (Nebraska, Michigan State, and Illinois) in the final Big Ten standings. It's been a while since a team won the Big Ten by 4 games.

After the game, Michigan held their Senior Day ceremony, and honored 5 seniors/grad students:

- [Nimari Burnett](#) – Nimari played for 3 years at Michigan, and he was a steady, quiet leader.
- [Roddy Gayle Jr.](#) – Roddy played for 2 years at Michigan, and he has been a valuable sub.
- [Yaxel Lendeborg](#) – Yaxel only played for 1 year at Michigan, but he's made the most of it.
- [Charlie May](#) – Charlie played for 2 years at Michigan, on the Scout Team.
- [Will Tschetter](#) – Will played for 4 years at Michigan, a true rarity these days. In fact, there were only 33 players in Division 1 basketball this year who played all 4 years at only one school.

### **Game Flow**

The Iowa game was close and tense the whole way. There were 8 ties and 14 lead changes. Michigan led more often than Iowa, but they couldn't pull away. Michigan took an early 3-0 lead, then Iowa went on a miserable 11-2 run to go up 11-5 at the 14:19 mark. Michigan clawed their way back, and got another lead (14-13) with 10:05 to go. The lead went back and forth for a couple minutes, then Michigan started to pull away. They were up 5 points (26-21) at the 3:37 mark, when they did their traditional pre-halftime swoon. They let Iowa go on a 9-4 run to end the half, all tied up: 30-30.

Michigan opened the 2<sup>nd</sup> half with a nice run to regain the lead. They were up by 7 points (42-35) at the 16:07 mark, but they couldn't hold the lead. Iowa went on another run, this time 9-2, to go up by 3 points (46-43) with 12:25 to go. Michigan kept their composure, and slowly regained the lead, up 10 points (63-53) at the 6:14 mark. This was the largest lead for either team, and it didn't last long. Iowa promptly went on an 11-1 run to tie the game, 64-64 with 1:57 to go. Michigan scored to go up by 2, then Iowa tied it again (66-66) at the 0:52 mark. Michigan led the rest of the way, making one more basket and enough of their free throws to win by 3 points, 71-68.

The MSU game was also close and tense the whole way. There were 5 ties and 5 lead changes, although Michigan led the game for most of the time. The few times MSU led, Michigan didn't let them get too far ahead, never by more than 5 points. Michigan had a few decent leads, 8-9 points, but State always came back and either got close or pulled ahead. All except for the final surge by Michigan to put the game away.

State scored the first 5 points, but Michigan kept pace, and finally tied things up (7-7) at the 15:28 mark. Michigan went ahead, and pushed their lead up to 7 points (14-7) with 13:24 left. State hung around, getting as close as 3 points a couple times, but Michigan finally pushed their lead up to 9 points (23-14) at the 9:00 mark. State went on a 13-4 run to tie it up (27-27) with 5:58 left, but Michigan went back ahead by 6 points (35-29) at the 4:09 mark. State wouldn't go away, and climbed back into the lead (41-37) with 1:47 left in the half. Fortunately, Michigan went on a 5-0 run to end the half up by one point, 42-41.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> half was more of the same. Michigan led most of the time, but they couldn't pull away from MSU. Michigan pushed their 1-point halftime lead to 6 points (49-43) at the 17:42 mark, but State went on an 8-2 run to tie it up again (51-51) with 15:27 to go. It was still tied up (53-53) a few seconds later, when State went ahead again. MSU was up by 4 points (61-57) at the 12:59 mark, but Michigan tied it up again (61-61) with 11:51 to go. It was Michigan's turn to go ahead, and they led by 5-7 points for the next 5 minutes. With 6:10 to go, Michigan was up by 5 points (73-68), but State got within 3 points (73-70) at the 3:47 mark. That was as close as they'd get the rest of the game. Michigan pushed the lead up to 11 points (83-72) with 0:54 left, and held off every push by State to get back in it, winning by 10. It was a glorious victory.

### **Stats**

[The stats for the Iowa game](#) were solid. Michigan shot well overall (24/45 = 53.3%), they shot 3-pointers very well (6/12 = 50.0%), and they shot free throws pretty well (17/22 = 77.3%). They crushed Iowa on the boards (38-25), but they gave away all 13 of those extra possessions in turnovers (18-5). They won this game with great shooting and rebounding, but they almost lost it due to heavy turnovers.

[The stats for the MSU game](#) were very good. Michigan shot well overall (27/55 = 49.1%), they shot 3-pointers very well (10/22 = 45.5%), and they shot free throws very well (26/29 = 89.7%). They won the rebounding battle (35-32), but lost the turnover battle (10-7). They won this game with superior shooting.

### **Who Started?**

The starters for both games were [Nimari Burnett](#), [Elliot Cadeau](#), [Morez Johnson Jr.](#), [Yaxel Lendeborg](#), and [Aday Mara](#).

### **Who Looked Good?**

Lendeborg was the star of both games, with a tied-for-team-high 16 points vs. Iowa, and a team-high 27 points vs. MSU. He had a great game vs. MSU in his final appearance in Crisler, shooting 8/12 overall, 5/6 from 3-point range, and 6/6 from the free throw line.

Johnson was the only other Michigan player in double figures for both games, with a tied-for-team-high 16 points vs. Iowa, and 18 points vs. MSU. He also had 8 and 7 rebounds.

Mara had one good game (14 points vs. Iowa) and one decent game (4 points vs. MSU). He was in foul trouble for most of the State game, only playing 19 minutes.

Cadeau had one good game (11 points vs. Iowa) and one lousy game (2 points vs. MSU). He got 9 of his 11 points in the Iowa game at the free throw line.

Burnett had one good game (10 points vs. MSU) and one lousy game (3 points vs. Iowa). It was nice that he hit double figures in his final game in Crisler.

[Roddy Gayle Jr.](#) had one good game (15 points vs. MSU) and one decent game (6 points vs. Iowa) off the bench. It was nice that he hit double figures in his final game in Crisler.

[Trey McKenney](#) had one good game (12 points vs. MSU) and one decent game (5 points vs. Iowa) off the bench.

### **Who Looked Not-So-Good?**

[Will Tschetter](#) had another worthless week off the bench, with 0 and 2 points. He deserved better in his final game at Crisler.

### **Who Else Played?**

No one else played.

### **Who Didn't Play?**

The scholarship players who didn't play were [Oscar Goodman](#) and [Malick Kordel](#). [L.J. Cason](#) and [Winters Grady](#) are both out with injuries.

None of the Scout Team players ([Howard Easley Jr.](#), [Harrison Hochberg](#) and [Charlie May](#)) got to play this week.

### **What Does It Mean?**

These were two weird games. On the one hand, since Michigan had clinched the regular season Big Ten championship the week before, they were meaningless in the Big Ten standings. On the other hand, they were very important, since they kept Michigan at #3 in the AP Poll, and kept them in the running for a #1 seed in the NCAA Tournament. They give Michigan some momentum and confidence heading into the Big Ten Tournament and the NCAA Tournament. Plus, it's always great to beat State.

### **This Week**

This week, Michigan plays at least one game, in the [Big Ten Tournament](#) in the United Center in Chicago. Since they won the Big Ten regular season championship (by 4 games!), they are the #1 seed, and they get a triple-bye into the Friday (quarterfinal) round. They will play on Friday (03/13/2026, 12:00 p.m. EDT, BTN) against TBD. They won't know their opponent until the game on Thursday is played. The teams they could face are:

- Tuesday - (#16 seed) Maryland vs. (#17 seed) Oregon
- Wednesday - Winner of the Tuesday game vs. (#9 seed) Iowa
- Thursday - Winner of the Wednesday game vs. (#8 seed) Ohio State

Michigan beat all 4 of these teams in the regular season, either by a little (Iowa - 3 points) or a lot (Maryland - 18 points, Oregon - 10 points, and Ohio State - 12 points and 11 points).

If Michigan wins the game on Friday, they will play in the semifinals on Saturday (03/14/2026, 1:00 p.m. EDT, CBS) against another TBD. The possible teams for Saturday's game are:

- Wednesday - (#13 seed) USC vs. (#12 seed) Washington
- Thursday - Winner of the Wednesday game vs. (#5 seed) Wisconsin
- Friday - Winner of the Thursday game vs. (#4 seed) Illinois

It would be nice for Michigan to get another shot at Wisconsin, the only Big Ten team to beat Michigan in the regular season. They beat all the other teams in the regular season.

If Michigan wins the game on Saturday, they will play for the Big Ten Tournament championship on Sunday (03/15/2026, 2:30 p.m. EDT, CBS) vs. the winner of the other side of the [bracket](#). They beat all the teams on the other side of the bracket in the regular season.

Check back next week to find out what happened and why. I'll be out of town, with spotty Internet connectivity, so my report might be a little different.

Go Blue!