

Nothing But 'Net - Week #23 - 03/16/2026 - Almost Tournament Champions

I'm away from my desktop and laptop, using my iPad, so this report will be shorter and less detailed this week. Sorry.

The University of Michigan men's basketball team played three games this past week as the #1 seed in the Big Ten Tournament in Chicago, and they won two and lost the third. They finished 2nd in the tournament. [On Friday \(03/13/2026\), they beat \(#8 seed\) Ohio State 71-67](#), [on Saturday \(03/14/2026\), they beat \(#5 seed\) Wisconsin 68-65](#), then [on Sunday \(03/15/2026\), they lost to \(#7 seed\) Purdue 80-72](#). Michigan's record is now 31-3 (19-1 in Big Ten).

What Happened?

Michigan fought their way to the tournament championship game, and they were tied at halftime, but a disastrous start to the 2nd half put them in a hole they just couldn't dig out of. They almost won the tournament, but not quite.

The two wins to get them to the championship game were very exciting.

Game Flow

OSU:

Michigan led for all but 54 seconds of the game, but never pulled away. Michigan led by as many as 11 points (25-14 at the 8:36 mark in the 1st half), but they usually were ahead by 5-7 points. OSU got within 4 points at halftime, 39-35. The 2nd half was much closer, with Michigan only leading by 2-4 points most of the way. They pushed their lead up to 7 points (59-52) at the 9:20 mark, but it didn't last. OSU went ahead for the first time all game, 61-60, with 5:40 left. This was the start of their 54 seconds; by the 4:46 mark Michigan had tied it up, 62-62. Michigan never trailed again, and won by 4.

Wisconsin:

The Wisconsin game was much closer, with 7 ties and 6 lead changes. Wisconsin led for more of the game, but Michigan never let Wisconsin get too far ahead. The 1st half was a seesaw affair for most of the half, until Wisconsin pulled ahead by 8 points (26-18) at the 4:26 mark. That woke Michigan up, and they fought their way back to tie the game up at halftime, 28-28. Michigan started the 2nd half strong, and opened up an 11-point lead (42-31) at the 14:20 mark. They pushed their lead to 15 points (54-39) with 9:50 to go, and it looked like Michigan was going to run away with the game. No one told Wisconsin, and they stormed back with a 17-2 run to tie it up (56-56) at the 5:31 mark. Wisconsin went up by 4 points (62-58) with 3:50 left, but that was it for them. Once Michigan tied the game up (62-62) at the 1:51 mark, they never trailed again. It was tied 65-65 in the last 29 seconds, and Michigan held the ball for the last shot. It worked: Yaxel Lendeborg hit a 3-pointer with 0.4 seconds left to win the game. It was very exciting.

Purdue:

The first half of the Purdue game was close and tense, with 4 ties and 5 lead changes. It was all tied up at halftime, 38-38. The 2nd half was a train wreck. Purdue went ahead by 7 points (45-38) before the first media timeout (17:45 mark), and that was it for Michigan. Purdue never trailed in the 2nd half, leading by as many as 14 points (60-46 at the 12:25 mark). Michigan did manage to get within 5 points once (68-63 with 3:47 left), but Purdue pushed their lead back up to 11 points, and won by 8.

Stats

OSU:

Overall shooting - 24/53 = 45.3% (OK)

3-point shooting - 5/17 = 29.4% (Poor)

Free throws - 18/24 = 75.0% (OK)
Rebounds - Michigan won 34-32
Turnovers - Michigan won 9-10

Wisconsin:

Overall shooting - 25/58 = 43.1% (OK)
3-point shooting - 8/25 = 32.0% (OK)
Free throws - 10/12 = 83.3% (Good)
Rebounds - Michigan won 40-29
Turnovers - Michigan lost 14-11

Purdue:

Overall shooting - 30/64 = 46.9% (OK)
3-point shooting - 7/24 = 29.2% (OK)
Free throws - 5/6 = 83.3% (Good)
Rebounds - Michigan won 33-29
Turnovers - Michigan lost 7-2

Who Started?

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

Who Looked Good?

Mara had a great week, with 17, 16, and 14 points.

Cadeau also had a great week, with 15, 15, and 10 points. He also had 10 assists in the Purdue game, for a double-double.

Lendeborg had two good games (12 points vs. Wisconsin and 20 points vs. Purdue) and one lousy game (6 points vs. OSU).

Burnett had one good game (12 points vs. Purdue) and two lousy games (6 points vs. OSU and 4 points vs. Wisconsin).

Johnson had one good game (11 points vs. OSU), one decent game (8 points vs. Purdue), and one lousy game (4 points vs. Wisconsin).

[Trey McKenney](#) had two good games (12 points vs. OSU and 10 points vs. Wisconsin) and one decent game (6 points vs. Purdue) off the bench.

Who Looked Not-So-Good?

[Will Tschetter](#) was worthless again off the bench, with 0, 3, and 0 points.

[Roddy Gayle Jr.](#) had a quiet week off the bench, with 4, 4, and 2 points.

Who Else Played?

No one else played this week.

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 Eisley Jr.](#), [Harrison Hochberg](#), and [Charlie May](#)) got to play this week.

What Does It Mean?

On the one hand, the Big Ten Tournament didn't mean anything to Michigan; they kept their #1 seed in their preferred host site. On the other hand, the loss to Purdue in the championship game halted Michigan's 6-game winning streak, and may have hurt their momentum and confidence going into the Big Dance.

This Week

This week Michigan plays at least one game in the NCAA Tournament, as the #1 seed in the Midwest Region in Buffalo, NY. On Thursday (03/19/2026, Time: TBD, TV: TBD), they play the #16 seed (the winner of the UMBC/Howard game). If they win that game, they'll play again on Saturday (03/21/2026, Time: TBD, TV: TBD) against the winner of the (#8 seed) Georgia vs. (#9 seed) St. Louis game.

The other high seeds in the Midwest Region are:

- #2 Iowa State
- #3 Virginia
- #4 Alabama

Michigan is the only Big Ten team in the Midwest Region.

The other Big Ten teams in the Big Dance are:

- #3 (East) Michigan State
- #7 (East) UCLA
- #8 (East) Ohio State

- #3 (South) Illinois
- #4 (South) Nebraska
- #9 (South) Iowa

- #2 (West) Purdue
- #5 (West) Wisconsin

Check back next week to find out what happened and why. I'll still be out of town, with just my iPad, so my report will be similar to this one.

Go Blue!