

Nothing But 'Net - Week #24 - 03/23/2026 - Sweet, Again

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 two games this past week as the #1 seed in the Midwest Region of the NCAA Tournament in Buffalo, NY, and they won both of them. [On Thursday \(03/19/2026\), they beat \(#16 seed\) Howard 101-80](#), then [on Saturday \(03/21/2026\), they beat \(#9 seed\) Saint Louis 95-72](#). Michigan's record is now 33-3.

What Happened?

For the second year in a row, Michigan is headed to the Sweet 16! They won the games in the first and second rounds convincingly, although they did have a few scary moments. In both games, once they started pulling away in the 2nd half, they didn't look back.

Game Flow

Michigan never trailed in the Howard game, although they did let Howard get within 2 points early in the 2nd half. Michigan scored an easy slam dunk to start the game, just 8 seconds in. Howard tied it up 2-2, and that was the last time Michigan wasn't leading. Michigan went ahead by 10 points (16-6) at the 13:41 mark, and it looked like they were going to run away with the game early. Not so fast. After missing their first five 3-point shots, Howard got hot and made their next seven 3-pointers in a row. That kept the game close, although Michigan never lost their lead. The lead was in the 6-8 point range for most of the half, getting as low as 3 points once. With 57 seconds left in the half, Michigan had their largest lead of the game to that point: 11 points (50-39). As they have done too often this season, Michigan had a terrible time closing out the 1st half. They let Howard go on a 7-0 run in the last 57 seconds, cutting the Michigan lead to just 4 points, 50-46. Yikes.

It got worse in the opening minutes of the 2nd half, when Howard cut the lead to 2 points (50-48) at the 19:44 mark, and got the ball back with a chance to tie the game or go ahead. Fortunately, they turned the ball over, and Michigan kept the lead, and started to pull away. Michigan pushed their lead back to 9 points (61-52) with 17:18 left, then to 10 points (68-58) at the 15:00 mark. That was it for Howard; they never got the lead down under 10 points again. Michigan pushed it to 20 points (85-65) with 8:24 left, and over 30 points (98-67) with 3:27 to go. [Coach May](#) put in the subs, and Howard made their score look closer than it really was, losing by "only" 21 points.

The Saint Louis game was much closer, with 3 ties and 7 lead changes. SLU led for most of the first 3 minutes, but Michigan went ahead (11-10) at the 16:39 mark. They got the lead up to 8 points (20-12) with 15:16 left, but SLU came back with a 15-7 run over the next 5 minutes to go back in front by 4 points (27-23) at the 10:22 mark. Michigan went back on top (28-27) with 9:36 left, and they never trailed again. They pushed their 1st half lead as high as 12 points (46-34) at the 1:50 mark, and led by 9 points (48-39) at halftime.

SLU made one last run at the start of the 2nd half, pulling to within 4 points (57-53) at the 15:50 mark, but that was it for them. Michigan pushed the lead back up to 8 points (61-53) in 40 seconds, and finally got it back over 10 points (69-58) with 11:17 left. SLU never got closer than that the rest of the game as Michigan pushed their lead past 20 points (84-63) at the 6:33 mark, and never let it get below 20 the rest of the way. Coach May brought in the subs for the last minute, and Michigan won by 23.

Stats

[The stats for the Howard game](#) were fabulous:

Overall shooting - 37/55 = 67.3% (Great)

3-point shooting - 11/24 = 45.8% (Great)

Free throws - 16/20 = 80.0% (Very good)

Rebounds - Michigan won 35-23
Turnovers - Michigan won 4-8

[The stats for the Saint Louis game](#) were very good:

Overall shooting - 34/61 = 55.7% (Very good)

3-point shooting - 11/23 = 47.8% (Great)

Free throws - 16/23 = 69.6% (Good)

Rebounds - Michigan won 42-27

Turnovers - Michigan lost 9-8

Who Started?

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

Who Looked Good?

Johnson had a great week, with 21 and 15 points. His 21 points vs. Howard were the game high for Michigan, and he also had 10 rebounds, for an impressive double-double. He is just the fifth player in NCAA Tournament history to score 20 points, grab 10 rebounds, and shoot 100%. He was 8/8 overall, 1/1 from deep. He was awesome.

Mara also had a great week, with 19 and 16 points. He was unguardable for both opponents, and shot very well: 8/10 vs. Howard and 7/12 vs. SLU.

Burnett had a good week, with 15 and 11 points.

Lendeborg had a great game vs. SLU (game-high 25 points) and a good game vs. Howard (9 points). He was unstoppable vs. SLU.

Cadeau had one good game (12 points vs. SLU) and one quiet game (5 points vs. Howard).

[Trey McKenney](#) had a good week off the bench, with 10 and 8 points.

[Roddy Gayle Jr.](#) had a good week off the bench, with 14 and 3 points.

Who Looked Not-So-Good?

[Will Tschetter](#) had a quiet week off the bench, with 6 and 2 points.

Who Else Played?

Both games were blowouts at the end, so several of the non-mainstream players got to play in both games.

[Howard Eisley Jr.](#) didn't attempt a shot in either game.

[Oscar Goodman](#) scored 3 points vs. SLU on an "and one" basket. He missed his only shot vs. Howard.

[Malick Kordel](#) scored 2 points vs. Howard on a dunk. He didn't attempt a shot vs. SLU.

[Charlie May](#) didn't attempt a shot in either game.

Who Didn't Play?

All the able-bodied scholarship players got to play this week. [L.J. Cason](#) and [Winters Grady](#) are both out with injuries.

[Harrison Hochberg](#) was the only Scout Team player who didn't get to play this week.

What Does It Mean?

These two wins were huge. As a #1 seed, Michigan is expected to make it to the Final Four, but they have to win the games leading up to it, and these two games were part of that. They looked very good, and they showed real composure and confidence when things got (a little) scary.

On to the Sweet 16!

This Week

This week Michigan plays at least one game in the Sweet 16 and Elite 8 rounds of the NCAA Tournament, as the #1 seed in the Midwest Region in Chicago. On Friday (03/27/2026, 7:35 p.m. EDT, TBS), they play (#4 seed) Alabama. If they win that game, they'll play again on Sunday (03/29/2026, Time: TBD, TV: TBD) against the winner of the (#6 seed) Tennessee vs. (#2 seed) Iowa State game.

[Alabama](#) is currently 25-9, with impressive wins over (#5) St. John's, (#8) Illinois, Kentucky, Oklahoma, Texas A&M, Auburn (twice), (#20) Arkansas, (#22) Tennessee, and Texas Tech (in the NCAA Tournament). They have lost to (#2) Purdue, (#12) Gonzaga, (#1) Arizona, (#11) Vanderbilt, Texas, Tennessee, (#19) Florida, and Georgia. They have one noteworthy player: Labaron Philon Jr. They have a lot of height: two 7-footers, two 6'11" players, and two 6'10" players. As you would expect in a Sweet 16 game against a #4 seed, this will be an extremely challenging game. Michigan is playing well, but so is Alabama. Michigan can win this game, but they need to stay sharp.

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!