

Nothing But 'Net – Week #27 - 04/13/2026 – Season Wrap-Up, Final Grades, And Looking Ahead

The (#1) University of Michigan men's basketball team's 2025-2026 season is over. They finished the season with a record of 37-3 (19-1 in Big Ten). They finished all alone in 1st place in the regular season standings (by 4 games), lost in the championship game of the [Big Ten Tournament](#), and won the National Championship in the [NCAA Tournament](#).

Season Wrap-Up

This season was the best season in Michigan men's basketball history. Period. Michigan set a new record for wins in a season (37), and won the National Championship. Statistically, this team was the second best team in last 50 years, behind only the 1999 Duke team. It was a truly special team and a truly special season.

Normally, at this point I'd talk about "good wins" and "bad wins" and "good losses" and "bad losses", but this season was made up almost entirely of "good wins".

The 3 losses all came to teams that ended up ranked in the final AP Top 25:

- Home vs. (#25) Wisconsin – [01/10/2026 91-88](#)
- Neutral court vs. (#4) Duke – [02/21/2026 68-63](#)
- Neutral court vs. (#6) Purdue – [03/15/2026 80-72](#)

Only 5 of the wins were even close (less than 4 points = one possession):

- Neutral court vs. Wake Forest – [11/11/2025 85-84](#)
- At Penn State – [01/06/2026 74-72](#)
- Home vs. (#5) Nebraska – [01/27/2026 75-72](#)
- At Iowa – [03/05/2026 71-68](#)
- Neutral court vs. (#23) Wisconsin – [03/14/2026 68-65](#)

Look at that: Michigan only lost one game at home, and only had one other close game at home. On the road, Michigan was undefeated (11-0). Their other two losses were on neutral courts (12-2).

Michigan won:

- 29 games by at least 10 points
- 16 games by at least 20 points
- 11 games by at least 30 points
- 7 games by at least 40 points

Even though all the wins were important, some were more important than the rest:

- Home vs. Oakland – [11/03/2025 121-78](#) This was the season opener for Michigan, and it gave us some idea of the firepower that Michigan had. It was also the season high for points.
- Neutral court vs. Wake Forest – [11/11/2025 85-84](#) This was an important game because Michigan (barely) lost to Wake Forest last season.
- At TCU – [11/14/2025 67-63](#) This was Michigan's first true road game of the season.
- Neutral court vs. San Diego State – [11/24/2025 94-54](#) This was the first game of the Players Era Festival in Las Vegas. SDSU was supposed to be pretty good, but Michigan beat them by 40 points. It was a sign of things to come.

- Neutral court vs. (#21) Auburn – [11/25/2025 102-72](#) This was the second game of the Players Era Festival, and Michigan's first game of the season against a ranked opponent. It was also a rematch of the game that knocked Michigan out of the NCAA Tournament last season. It wasn't even close, although Michigan "only" won by 30 points.
- Neutral court vs. (#12) Gonzaga – [11/26/2025 101-61](#) This was the championship game of the Players Era Festival, and it was no contest. Michigan destroyed previously-undefeated Gonzaga by 40 points. It gave Michigan wins by 40, 30, and 40 points in the tournament.
- Home vs. Rutgers – [12/06/2025 101-60](#) This was Michigan's first Big Ten game of the season, and they started out with a bang: another 40+ point win.
- Home vs. Villanova – [12/09/2025 89-61](#) Another lopsided win over a big-name school. They almost won by 30 points.
- At Maryland – [12/13/2025 101-83](#) This was Michigan's first Big Ten game on the road this season.
- Home vs. (#24) USC – [01/02/2026 96-66](#) This was Michigan's first Big Ten game against a ranked opponent, and they won by 30 points.
- Home vs. (#5) Nebraska – [01/27/2026 75-72](#) Nebraska came into this game undefeated (20-0) and in 1st place in the Big Ten. It was a close, exciting game, and Michigan won. This was the biggest win of the season to that point.
- At (#7) Michigan State – [01/30/2026 83-71](#) It's always great to beat "Little Brother", but this one was especially sweet, since it was in East Lansing against a Top-10 team by 12 points.
- Home vs. UCLA – [02/14/2026 86-56](#) Another lopsided win (30 points) over a really big-name school. It was UCLA's first visit to Crisler as a Big Ten team, and it gave Michigan their 2nd sweep of the new (Pac-4) Big Ten teams. Michigan went 4-0 against them last season and again this season. They're the only Big Ten team from the non-West Coast 14 that has never lost to the Pac-4 teams in Big Ten play.
- Home vs. Minnesota – [02/24/2026 77-67](#) This was the game where Michigan clinched at least a share of the Big Ten title.
- At (#10) Illinois – [02/27/2026 84-70](#) This was the game where Michigan clinched the outright Big Ten title. It was also a double-digit win over a Top 10 team on the road. It also ended an 8-game losing streak to Illinois. This is the same Illinois team that made it to the Final Four.
- Home vs. (#8) Michigan State – [03/08/2026 90-80](#) It's always great to beat "Little Brother", and even better to sweep them, at home, on Senior Day, by double digits. This win also got Michigan up to 19 wins in Big Ten play, a new school and conference record.
- Neutral court vs. (#23) Wisconsin – [03/14/2026 68-65](#) This win avenged Michigan's only regular season Big Ten loss, and made it so Michigan beat every other Big Ten team at least once. It also got Michigan into the championship game of the Big Ten Tournament, which assured them of a #1 seed in the upcoming NCAA Tournament.
- Neutral court vs. (#18) Alabama – [03/27/2026 90-77](#) Last season, Michigan made it as far as the Sweet Sixteen before losing in the NCAA Tournament. This win got Michigan into the Elite Eight.

- Neutral court vs. (#23) Tennessee – [03/29/2026 95-62](#) This was the game that got Michigan into the Final Four, and what a game it was! Beating a ranked team by 33 points in the Elite Eight? Wow!
- Neutral court vs. (#2) Arizona – [04/04/2026 91-73](#) The contest between two #1 seeds in the Final Four was supposed to be a close, tense, heavyweight battle. Instead, Michigan ran the #2 team in the country off the floor. It wasn't as close as the final score suggests. It also gave Michigan five wins in the tournament by double digits, and five wins in the tournament scoring at least 90 points.
- Neutral court vs. (#7) Connecticut – [04/06/2026 69-63](#) This one was for all the marbles, and Michigan won it. It wasn't a pretty game, with both teams shooting poorly, but a win is a win, and a National Championship is a huge win.

Out of all these wins, the win in the National Championship game is obviously the most important, but the wins over Michigan State were my favorites.

Final Grades

Here are my final grades, with the mid-term grades listed first:

Freshman Eligibility

- [Oscar Goodman](#) (C+/C+) – Oscar only played a little (16 games, 85 minutes), but it's enough to get him a grade instead of "Inc.". He scored 22 points on decent shooting: 10/24 (41.7%) overall, 0/6 from deep. He had his chances out there, and he didn't do much with them.
- [Winters Grady](#) (C/Inc.) – Winters played a little in the first half of the season (7 games, 45 minutes), but he was injured for most of the second half (2 games, 9 minutes). He scored 26 points on mediocre shooting: 7/20 (35.0%) overall, 6/19 (31.6%) from deep. That's right: all but one of his shot attempts was from 3-point range, and he missed his only 2-point shot. He was "Just A Shooter", with little rebounding or defense. I say "was" because he has entered the Transfer Portal.
- [Malick Kordel](#) (C/C) – Malick only played a little (14 games, 58 minutes), but it's enough to get him a grade instead of "Inc.". He scored 17 points on good shooting: 8/14 (57.1%) overall, 0/1 from deep. He's tall, and he's strong, but he doesn't have a lot of basketball IQ. When he's in there, he gets some rebounds and makes some dunks, but that's about it. He has also entered the Transfer Portal.
- [Ricky Liburd](#) (Inc./Inc.) – Ricky didn't play this season. He was medically redshirted.
- [Trey McKenney](#) (B/A-) – Trey played in all 40 games this season, all off the bench. He averaged 9.9 points/game on pretty good shooting: 126/273 (46.2%) overall, 68/174 (39.1%) from deep. He improved steadily as the season went on, and he became a key contributor. The most impressive thing was that he was one of the best defenders on the team, and he was often in the game during "crunch time". His 3-pointer in the final minutes of the National Championship game was the dagger.

Sophomore Eligibility

- [L.J. Cason](#) (B-/B) – L.J. played in 28 games this season, all off the bench. He averaged 8.4 points/game on good shooting: 81/161 (50.3%) overall, 33/82 (40.2%) from deep. In fact, he had the best 3-point shooting percentage of all the mainstream players. His scoring was secondary to his contributions as a "pass first" point guard. Unfortunately, he injured his knee in the Illinois game on 02/27/2026, and missed the last 11 games of the season. In fact, his rehab is going to take long enough that he's already planning on medically redshirting for all of next season. Ouch.

- [Howard Easley Jr.](#) (Inc./Inc.) – Howard was on the Scout Team, and he didn't play much: 9 games, 11+ minutes, 1/5 shooting (all 3-point shots).
- [Morez Johnson Jr.](#) (B+/A-) – Morez was an important contributor to Michigan's success. He was the starting power forward for every game, and he played well. He's strong around the basket, and he's a capable backup at center, despite being "only" 6'10". He averaged 13.1 points/game on good shooting: 195/313 (62.3%) overall, 12/35 (34.3%) from deep.

Junior Eligibility

- [Elliot Cadeau](#) (A-/A-) – Elliot was the starting point guard all season, and he played well. He averaged 10.5 points/game on pretty good shooting: 136/331 (41.1%) overall, 65/173 (37.6%) from deep. He led the team in assists with 234. He was the Most Outstanding Player in the Final Four.
- [Harrison Hochberg](#) (Inc./Inc.) – Harrison was on the Scout Team, and he was voluntarily redshirted this season.
- [Aday Mara](#) (A-/A-) – Aday was the starting center for 39 of the 40 games, and he played well. He averaged 12.1 points/game on very good shooting: 201/301 (66.8%) overall, 3/10 from deep. He was the leading shot blocker on the team, with 103, which is a new Michigan record. He was a force out there on both offense and defense.
- [Charlie May](#) (Inc./Inc.) – Charlie was on the Scout Team, and he didn't play much: 8 games, 18 minutes. He did shoot well: 2/4 overall, 2/3 from deep. One of those 3-pointers was in the Elite Eight game against Tennessee.

Senior/Grad Student Eligibility

- [Nimari Burnett](#) (B/B) – Nimari was a little disappointing this season. He had several good games, but he occasionally disappeared out there. As the starting shooting guard, he needed to be more consistent in his offensive output. He averaged 8.2 points/game on pretty good shooting: 112/247 (45.3%) overall, 60/160 (37.5%) from deep.
- [Roddy Gayle Jr.](#) (B+/B+) – Roddy was a great "6th man" this season. He played in 39 of the 40 games, all but one off the bench. He averaged 7.3 points/game on good shooting: 101/208 (46.3%) overall, 21/66 (31.8%) from deep. He always played hard and fast when he was out there, and he was a fierce rebounder who played like a much taller player.
- [Yaxel Lendeborg](#) (A/A+) – Yaxel was the undisputed star on this team, the only player to get an "A" for his midterm grade, and the only player to get a rare "A+" from me for his final grade. He did it all. He was the leading scorer (15.1 points/game), the 2nd leading rebounder (271), and 2nd on the team in assists (129). He shot very well: 200/388 (51.5%) overall, 67/180 (37.2%) from deep. He was the leading scorer in most games. He was the MVP of the Players Era Festival, the Big Ten Player of the Year, and an All American. He was awesome.
- [Will Tschetter](#) (C+/C-) – Will started the season strong, but finished it in a scoring slump. He played in all 40 games, with one start. He averaged 3.5 points/game on decent shooting: 41/109 (37.6%) overall, 29/84 (34.5%) from deep. He had more scoreless games (14) than double figure games (3) this season.

Awards

Here are my awards for this season's team:

- Most Valuable Player: Yaxel Lendeborg. He was great on both ends of the court. He was the Big Ten Player of the Year, and an All American.
- Most Improved Player: Roddy Gayle Jr. He was good last season, but even better this season.
- Best Defensive Player: Aday Mara. He was great at rim protection, setting a new Michigan single-season record for blocked shots.
- Sixth Man: Trey McKenney. He almost always gave the team a jolt when he came in.

Looking Ahead

Things all look promising for next season, but there are still many things up in the air.

How do you “look ahead” in the era of NIL and the Transfer Portal? It’s all just a guess. Who is going to return next season? Who is going to enter the Transfer Portal? Who is going to declare for the NBA Draft? Who is [Coach May](#) going to pick up in the Transfer Portal? Will all the incoming freshmen really show up? So many variables. Here are my best guesses, at this point:

Who Is Graduating/Out Of Eligibility?

This part is easy. The 4 players who are out of eligibility are:

- Nimari Burnett – He was a valuable part of the team for the last 3 seasons. He started every game for all 3 years, 109 games in a row. He will be missed.
- Roddy Gayle Jr. – He was a valuable part of the team for the last 2 season. He will be missed.
- Yaxel Lendeborg – He only played at Michigan for one season, but what a season it was. He was awesome, and he will be missed a lot.
- Will Tschetter – He was a true rarity in this brave new era of the infamous Transfer Portal: he played for all 4 years at just one school. He was a team leader and a great guy. He will be missed.

Who Has Already Entered The Transfer Portal?

The 2 players who have already entered the Transfer Portal are:

- Winters Grady – He never really fit in at Michigan. He wanted to fire up 3-pointers, and all the other players who got more playing time were more versatile. He can go somewhere with a scheme that allows for a “Just A Shooter” player to thrive.
- Malick Kordel – He is a project. He’s tall, he’s strong, he’s athletic, but he’s not really a basketball player yet. He can go somewhere where he can play a lot more, and get more experience and develop some basketball IQ. There are plenty of lesser-known schools that would love to have a 7’2” player, even if he needs a lot of work.

Who Might Enter The Transfer Portal?

I would be surprised to see anyone else enter the Transfer Portal this season.

Who Might Declare For The NBA Draft?

The 2 players with eligibility who might realistically declare for the NBA Draft are:

- Morez Johnson Jr. – He has been making noises about coming back to Michigan. He should probably put his name in the draft, go through the process, get evaluated, then make an informed decision at the deadline for staying/withdrawing from the draft. I'd guess the odds of him returning to Michigan are 50/50.
- Aday Mara – He hasn't made any commitments either way. Like Johnson, he should probably put his name in the draft, go through the process, get evaluated, then make an informed decision at the deadline for staying/withdrawing from the draft. I'd guess the odds of him returning to Michigan are 90/10, against.

Who Does That Leave As Returning Players?

After all the announced and potential departures listed above, who does that leave? The following 5 mainstream(ish) players could be back next season:

- Elliot Cadeau – He has definitely said that he'll be back next season. He will be the starting point guard again.
- L.J. Cason – He has definitely said that he will return next season, but he will miss the entire season with a medical redshirt while he rehabs his surgically repaired knee.
- Oscar Goodman – He has definitely said that he'll be back next season. Will he be able to contribute more than this season?
- Ricky Liburd – He has definitely said that he'll be back next season. Since we've never seen him play, we have no idea if he'll be able to contribute.
- Trey McKenney – He has definitely said that he'll be back next season. He should move up from "6th man" to starter.

Who Has Coach May Already Picked Up From The Transfer Portal?

Coach May has already picked up 1 player from the Transfer Portal:

- [J.P. Estrella](#) – He's a 6'11", 240 pound, forward/center. He's transferring to Michigan from Tennessee, where he played for 2 seasons, so he'll have junior eligibility. He's a pretty good shooter (140/235 = 59.6%) and a very good rebounder.

Who Are The Incoming Freshmen?

There are currently 6 incoming freshmen committed to Michigan for next season:

- [Malachi Brown](#) – He's a 3-star small forward from Knoxville, Tennessee. He's 6'5" tall and weighs 185 pounds. I can't find much information on him.
- [Lincoln Cosby](#) – He's a 4-star small forward from Montverde, Florida. He's 6'8" tall and weighs 195 pounds. It appears that he's a good outside shooter who can also go to the rim.
- [Quinn Costello](#) – He's a 4-star power forward from Medford, Massachusetts. He's 6'10" tall and weighs 195 pounds. He's a McDonald's All-American.
- [Joseph Hartman](#) – He's a 4-star shooting guard from Gainesville, Florida. He's 6'6" tall and weighs 193 pounds. As expected, he's a good outside shooter and scorer.
- [Brandon McCoy Jr.](#) – He's a 5-star shooting guard from Chatsworth, California. He's 6'5" tall and weighs 190 pounds. He's a McDonald's All-American, and Michigan's highest-ranked recruit in this class.

- [Marcus Moller](#) – He’s an unranked center from Denmark, although he currently plays for a team in Malaga, Spain. He’s unranked because he’s an international student. He’s 7’3” tall and weighs 230 pounds. He’s had some serious medical issues (testicular cancer), but it appears that he’s going to come to Michigan for the upcoming season. He’s the same height as Aday Mara, but he’s a different kind of player.

This is the #1 ranked freshman class in the country.

They’re freshmen, so the odds are that they’ll need some seasoning before they’re ready to contribute. A couple of them may play regular minutes. A couple more may get a few chances, then sit for most of the season. A couple may not work out, and hit the Transfer Portal after the season. That’s the way it goes with freshmen.

What’s Next?

Check back in late October for the next season of Michigan basketball.

Go Blue!