

# Michigan controls Purdue at Mackey Arena, 91-80

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WEST LAFAYETTE, IN— Over this past weekend, a video surfaced of Michigan star Yaxel Lendeborg. The video portrays Lendeborg, perhaps after a few beverages, using expletives about the Michigan-Purdue basketball rivalry. In particular, he details what Michigan would do to Purdue on the court when they met.

In a fairytale land painted Purdue black and gold, Purdue destroys Michigan and handles Lendeborg. The crowd chants at Lendeborg, which leads to him succumbing to pressure and performing poorly. In this world, Purdue wins and retakes control over the rivalry.

Unfortunately for Purdue, this is real life. Mackey Arena was painted black and gold by tipoff, but maize and blue was all over the court from then on. The Wolverines, led by a composed Lendeborg, beat the Boilermakers, 91-80.

The story of this game was interior dominance. By the numbers, if you did not actually watch the game, the rebounding numbers might point otherwise. Purdue actually outrebounded Michigan on the offensive glass, and only rebounded the ball eight less times than the Wolverines by the end of the game.

However, if you laid eyes on that game, Michigan was all over the glass. The second chance points created by the dynamic duo of Aday Mara (10 pts, 11 rebs, 2 blocks) and Morez Johnson Jr. (12 pts, 11 rebs). When they were rebounding the ball, they were kicking out to any number of contributors. The aforementioned Lendeborg (12 pts, 3-7 3PT, 2 blocks) is an athletic monster who picked up any pieces from those offensive boards. Elliot Cadeau (17 pts, 7 ast, 6-12 FG) led Michigan in scoring, and freshman Trey McKenney (13 pts, 4-7 FG) has been a revelation off the bench. There is nowhere to turn on this roster where you would find a player who is not ready for games like this one.

Braden Smith (20 pts, 4-13 FG, 6 ast) did not score a point in the first half, and he was quite overwhelmed by the size and athleticism of Michigan. Trey Kaufman-Renn was the offensive focal point for Purdue. Kaufman-Renn (27 pts, 12 rebs, 12-126 FG) was

exercising his patented push shot whenever he could, but the size of Mara and Johnson down low really disrupted his prowess. Michigan's game plan seemed to be centered around letting Kaufman-Renn have his day at times, as their real advantage was limiting perimeter shooting. Purdue, with the 2nd most efficient offense in America, was held to 31% from beyond the arc.

With Kaufman-Renn the only real factor, he was never going to be perfect. When he wasn't, the other weapons around him were rendered less effective. Oscar Cluff (4 pts, 1-4 FG) was a relative no show, and CJ Cox (3 pts, 1-4 3PT) didn't have much to offer from the perimeter, where he is a competent shooter.

Purdue's lack of size and athleticism was definitely exposed, but this game might have been more about Michigan's dominance. Purdue, with their size and strength in the backcourt, is not necessarily going to be able to dominate backcourts. When the Michigan backcourt is the one in question, you can forget about it. Cadeau has blossomed into a nice commander of the Wolverine offense. Lendeborg, Mara, and Johnson can all switch roles at any point. When Lendeborg isn't going off, it's likely one of those other two. Sometimes, it's McKenney off the bench. This Michigan team is deep, and teams like that are built for March.

The questions around Purdue have surfaced whenever they have taken losses this season. On the other side, Michigan has not really lost enough to make anyone ask any questions about them. The Wolverines have run through opponents like a knife through butter. Even a game at Purdue, in one of the toughest road environments, seemed like a ho-hum victory. Purdue will likely see this as a sign they need to find other ways to win against teams like Michigan that tower over them in matchups. Michigan will see this as a result expected— Lendeborg himself said postgame that he believes they are the "best team ever assembled."

The rest of America? They should see this as a warning sign and a message— you do not want to play against this team.