

THE SPORTIER

Trouble in Ann Arbor

The University of Michigan, once a perennial contender for the College Football Championship (until they annually face Ohio State), has fallen extremely flat this year. Saturday night, Michigan was blown out by No. 13 Wisconsin, 49-11, in Ann Arbor. Per ESPN Stats & Research Information, this loss was the worst home loss for the program since 1935, when they were shutout by Ohio State 38-0. Though blame does rest on the team itself, such as Michigan quarterback Joe Milton, who threw his first two passes for interceptions on Saturday, and the Michigan defense, which only recorded one total sack and zero takeaways, Coach Jim Harbaugh's position is in significant jeopardy. While Harbaugh has won 48 games in his tenure at his alma mater since he assumed the head coaching job in 2015, the Michigan program has been nothing short of underwhelming. With no Big Ten titles, 0 wins against Ohio State, a 2-3 record against Michigan State, and a 10-17 record against ranked opponents, it would only be in the best interest of the Wolverines to let him go in order to usher in a new era of coaching and recruiting. Harbaugh, with a contract of approximately \$8.1 million in a non-pandemic year, is the fourth-highest paid coach in college football, yet his teams have only finished in the top 10 one time, with 2017's squad ending unranked. Michigan is still one of the most prestigious college football programs in the country, though their relevance continues to plummet as they are struggling to stay afloat in this shortened season.



The NBA: Back So Soon?

Just over one month ago, the NBA concluded its most unique season, hosted inside a bubble at Disney World in Orlando. Just days ago, the NBA agreed to begin the 2020-21 NBA season... on December 22nd. The planned mere 71-day offseason leading up to the 72-game regular season will be the shortest across all four major North American sports in history, and while it is fantastic that the NBA will be continuing its Christmas Day games, this season brings up many concerns. Since teams are expected to travel, with many players just removed from the bubble experience, injuries will be much more difficult to deal with and to recover from on the road compared to in the bubble. In response to this, league officials expect that one-game road trips will be eliminated. Not only does this mean the obvious, that longer road trips will occur, but the schedule can include teams playing multiple teams from the same city or surrounding areas on a road trip (ex. playing both the Knicks and the Nets on one trip). Training Camp starts in less than one month, on December 1st, and even though teams that were in the bubble have a quick turnaround time to get prepared for another NBA season, the real question lies with the 8 teams that were exempt from the bubble. Medical professionals worry that, without playing live basketball games since March following the nationwide shutdown, these teams will be heavily unprepared for the physical toll of a 21-day training camp directly into games. It seems that the NBA is rushing their return, though their history in the bubble with COVID-19 and 0 total cases is promising from a pandemic standpoint. The schedule, if fulfilled as planned, will have the NBA season finish in July of 2021, just as an ordinary season would end, perfectly setting up a smooth transition back into normalcy for a 2021-22, hopefully COVID-free NBA season.



Sources:

[Yahoo! Sports](#), [ESPN](#), [Sports Reference](#), [Bleacher Report](#), [NBA](#),
[ESPN](#)