

	28	10/19/2019 • ATTENDANCE 110,669				
	21	BEAVER STADIUM UNIVERSITY PARK, PA.				
QT		1st	2nd	3rd	4th	Tot
Michigan		0	7	7	7	21
Penn State		7	14	0	7	28

## Michigan Wolverines Football's Fierce Comeback Falls Just Short

John Borton • The Wolverine

Michigan football did everything in its ferocious comeback at Penn State, before an increasingly fearful whiteout crowd — everything but come all the way back.

The Wolverines stood a mere three yards away from wiping it all away — a 21-0 first-half deficit, a 28-14 hole in the fourth quarter. But when senior quarterback Shea Patterson's toss over the middle tumbled off the hands of sophomore wide receiver Ronnie Bell — a fourth-down near-connection that would have tied the game — that comeback remained an almost.

Instead, Penn State (7-0, 4-0 Big Ten) escaped with a 28-21 win over a crestfallen Michigan crew (5-2, 3-2).

The numbers read like a decisive Michigan win. The Wolverines out-gained the Nittany Lions, 417-283. They piled up a dozen more first downs (26-14), with 141 yards rushing to Penn State's 101.

Patterson (24-of-41 passing for 276 yards, one interception) held his own against Penn State's Sean Clifford (14 of 25, 182 yards, three touchdowns). Those numbers could have looked much different if not for a barrage of friendly home flags, U-M head coach Jim Harbaugh strongly hinted.

But in the end, the Wolverines just couldn't overcome the road and the three-touchdown hole they dug on it.

"It was tough as hell, that last drive, and not coming up with it," Patterson said.

It was likely toughest of all on Bell (five catches, 82 yards), who clearly ached on the sidelines afterward.

"Ronnie is a fierce competitor," Patterson said. "He's being pretty hard on himself right now. But that doesn't take away the fact that he made a ton of great plays tonight to put us into that situation.

"We're just going to love on him. Maybe I could have run it in."

That the Wolverines even found themselves in position to tie the game in the final two minutes proved astounding, after their stumbling start.

"I thought our team played with great character and great effort the entire night, both sides of the ball," Harbaugh said. "Special teams ... fought really hard."

The fight just took effect too late for the Wolverines to completely recover.

Penn State struck first and with lightning-bolt destructiveness. On the Nittany Lions' second possession, Clifford fired a 37-yard bomb to Jahan Dotson, down to Michigan's 17. On the very next play, tight end Pat Freiermuth got behind viper Khaleke Hudson, hauling in the high floater that made it 7-0 Penn State.

Harbaugh thought the big tight end committed offensive pass interference on the play, setting the tone for calls and non-calls that left the Wolverines frustrated.

"There were a few OPI called on us versus the OPI that I thought should have been called on them on the first touchdown," Harbaugh said. "As far as the calls, the officiating goes, it will be interesting to compare some of those."

The five-play, 66-yard TD drive ended with 5:59 left in the first quarter, putting the Wolverines in an early bind. The whiteout crowd, already thunderous, went into full plug-your-ears mode.

The Wolverines tried to answer, but dropped passes kept them off the scoreboard in the opening quarter. They drove from their own 14 to the Penn State 36, but redshirt sophomore wideout Tarik Black — under tight coverage and maybe more than that — couldn't handle a fourth-and-three throw from Patterson.

Black felt he was interfered with, and many watching on replay agreed. But the whiteout crowd roared its approval, making it easy for flags to stay put.

That gave the ball back to Penn State, which constituted a really bad idea early on.

The Nittany Lions took only six plays to cover 64 yards, taking a 14-0 lead just four seconds into the second quarter. A 44-yard Ricky Slade run up the middle got things going, and Clifford's one-yard keeper put the touchdown on the board.

"It's big plays," redshirt freshman linebacker Cam McGrone said. "We gave up some key, explosive plays in the beginning. It came back to hurt us. A game like this, with a team as good as this, we can't allow any explosive plays, and we did that."

U-M probably didn't draw up contingency plans for a two-touchdown deficit. If it did, it didn't include a three-and-out, but that precisely what Penn State's swarming defense produced.

Penn State cornerback Tariq Castro-Fields then sliced through to pick off a Patterson screen pass attempt, and five plays later, the rout appeared on.

The Nittany Lions covered 49 yards in five plays, Clifford looping a 27-yard rainbow that speedy wideout KJ Hamler (six catches for 108 yards, two TDs) ran under for the touchdown. That widened the lead to 21-0 with 7:22 left in the half, and Michi-

gan's mountain appeared too high to climb, even with more than a half to play.

The Wolverines dug a pick in the tundra, though, driving 75 yards in eight plays to get a touchdown back. Patterson's 30-yard toss to junior wideout Nico Collins got the ball rolling. Officials wiped out a touchdown pass to Bell with an ineligible receiver penalty, but on the very next play, Penn State interfered with Black, giving U-M the ball on the Penn State 12.

Freshman tailback Zach Charbonnet (15 carries for 81 yards, two touchdowns) swept untouched around right end for the touchdown, U-M pulling to within 21-7 at the 2:55 mark.

The Wolverines saw one last first-half shot, but sophomore placekicker Jake Moody's 58-yard field goal attempt fell well short.

The teams battled through what appeared to be headed for a scoreless third quarter, until the Wolverines caught fire late. Charbonnet began an eight-play, 65-yard touchdown march with a 14-yard run. He finished it with bursts of 10, six and 12 yards, bolting up the middle for the score.

Suddenly, the Wolverines were within seven, 21-14, and the 110,669 in Beaver Stadium experienced a nervous noise-out with 1:05 left in the third quarter.

They came fully alive moments later, when Clifford found Hamler behind the Michigan defense on a 53-yard touchdown bomb. The explosion capped a six-play, 75-yard drive that Michigan appeared to have stopped in three plays.

But flags were never far away in Beaver Stadium on this night. Clifford threw a third-and-11 pass 40 yards downfield to no one. But senior cornerback Lavert Hill got whistled for defensive holding, giving Clifford another shot. He cashed it in for a 28-14 lead with 13:14 left.

Noting Michigan's defense never got the alignment signal for the game-winning touchdown pass, Harbaugh indicated things never should have gotten that far.

"Lavert's holding penalty that led to a touchdown on third-and-11 versus a couple of those there at the end," Harbaugh marveled. "I thought a couple of our receivers were getting tackled there the last couple plays of that drive."

Again, the Wolverines fought back, driving 75 yards in nine plays for a touchdown. A short throw to Bell went for 35 yards when he burst out on a strong run after the catch, but U-M nearly came away empty.

An apparent two-yard run for a touchdown by redshirt freshman back Hassan Haskins got wiped from the board by an official review, setting up fourth-and-goal at the Penn State 1. Patterson snuck it home, getting pushed into the end zone for the score to make it 28-21 with 8:48 left.

The Wolverines held, forcing a punt to the Penn State 47. They quickly moved into scoring position, a crucial third-down throw to freshman tight end Erick All going for 10 yards, down to the Nittany Lions' 7.

But they couldn't punch it in, Bell dropping the fourth-down throw in the end zone while getting yanked from behind by the jersey by a Penn State safety Lamont Wade.

The Wolverines still had a shot, with two minutes remaining and the Nittany Lions backed up on their own 3. But the home team punched out a game-winning first down on the ground, Hamler going in motion, stopping, then taking a handoff up the middle for the four yards that ended Michigan hopes.

Harbaugh's message afterward: keep going.

"I just complimented them on the effort they gave, the character they showed," he said. "[Team team will] hold their heads high and come back at it again on Monday, because we love football. That will be our mission."

## Report Card: Grading Michigan In A 28-21 Loss At Penn State

Chris Balas • TheWolverine

STATE COLLEGE, PA – Grading all aspects of Michigan's 28-21 loss at Penn State:

### Michigan Football Rushing Offense: C+

It's cliché, but the pass did seem to open up the run when U-M got the offense going in the third quarter. The Wolverines ran 12 times for 59 yards in that frame (4.9 yards per carry), while freshman Zach Charbonnet had 75 yards and two scores on 11 carries through three, averaging 6.8 per rush.

But Michigan managed only 17 yards on 10 carries in the fourth quarter ... winning time. The team finished with 141 yards and three touchdowns on the ground but only 3.4 per rush and didn't have a carry go for more than 14 yards.

Charbonnet was the only Wolverine with a clip higher than 2.8 yards (5.4).

### Michigan Football Passing Offense: B

Senior quarterback Shea Patterson had one of his best games in a Michigan uniform, completing 24 of 41 passes for 276 yards, but a horrible interception on a screen pass led to a Penn State touchdown. The team that wins the turnover battle usually wins the game ... and it was 1-0 PSU.

Pass protection was as good as it's been all year, Patterson getting sacked only once, and he did a better job staying in the pocket and surveying the field. The drops, of course, were critical, and some head-scratching pass interference penalties (and lack of some others) hindered the effort.

The Wolverines averaged 11.5 yards per completion.

### Michigan Football Rushing Defense: B

Penn State managed 101 yards rushing, but 44 came on one play. Starting running back Noah Cain finished with only 19 yards, and 13 came on one carry. The Wolverines were stout against the run.

They also did a good job slowing quarterback Sean Clifford and preventing him from scrambling. They held him to only 17 yards (10 yards on one carry) and a score while he finished with 1.5 yards per carry.

### Michigan Football Passing Defense: D

It was all or nothing, as it often is for the Michigan defense against a good team. There were too many big plays in the passing game, including touchdowns of 17, 25 and 53 yards, the latter the difference in the game on a blown coverage. Clifford averaged 13 yards per completion and was solid despite being pressured often and sacked twice.

Big plays in the passing game are killers, and they were the difference in this game.

### Michigan Football Special Teams: C-

Sophomore kicker Jake Moody never should have been put in position to attempt a 58-yarder before the half. He was several yards short on his only attempt.

Redshirt junior punter Will Hart had an early opportunity to get momentum for the defense by pinning PSU deep, but he put the ball in the end zone. He still averaged 46 yards per punt, though, and the punt coverage was outstanding, allowing just seven yards on three runbacks.

U-M's return teams did nothing (again) — they had a 14-yard punt return, but finished with a total of only 12 on five runbacks — and KJ Hamler's 40-yard kick return would have been a touchdown if not for a penalty.

## Michigan Wolverines Football: Five Best Players Of The Game

John Borton • TheWolverine

The five best players of the game when Michigan invaded Penn State features a leadoff hitter that ran away from the Wolverines at just the wrong time.

**1. Penn State receiver KJ Hamler:** Hamler made plays that absolutely crushed Michigan's hopes, including the game-winning, 53-yard touchdown catch. He wound up with six grabs for 108 yards, including two TD receptions. Hamler also made the clock-killing four-yard run to move the chains deep in Penn State territory at the end.

**2. Penn State cornerback Tariq Castro-Fields:** Castro-Fields secured the lone turnover on the night, one that made a huge swing in the game. He sliced in between several U-M blockers to pick off a screen pass. Five plays later, that turned into the touchdown that gave Penn State its 21-0 lead. The Penn State DB also registered eight tackles and an additional pass breakup.

**3. Senior quarterback Shea Patterson:** Patterson rallied the Wolverines back after that one big mistake. He completed 24 of 41 throws in the cacophony of Beaver Stadium, racking up 276 yards and putting Michigan in position to score and come back. His numbers would have been much better if U-M didn't face a half-dozen drops by receivers and some highly questioned flag drops. Patterson also rushed for 34 yards and a touchdown on a dozen carries.

**4. Penn State quarterback Sean Clifford:** Clifford's passing numbers weren't scintillating (14 of 25 for 182 yards), but he did fire three touchdown passes. He also led an offense that didn't turn the football over once, while rushing for 17 yards with a touchdown.

**5. Freshman tailback Zach Charbonnet:** The rookie running back stood tall in a tough place to play, piling up 81 yards on 15 carries. He scored two of Michigan's three touchdowns, averaging 5.4 yards per rush and was never tackled for a loss. He also caught a four-yard pass.

## Offense Notes: Patterson, U-M Show Grit And Resilience, But Come Up Short

Austin Fox • TheWolverine

When the Michigan Wolverines' football team went down 21-0 with 7:22 remaining in the second quarter, it looked like the Nittany Lions would win Saturday night's contest in Happy Valley handily.

U-M's offense fought back, however, and had a chance to potentially send the game into overtime with only 2:01 remaining.

The Maize and Blue first got on the board when freshman running back Zach Charbonnet found the end zone from 12 yards out at 2:55 of the second quarter, trimming Penn State's lead to 21-7 at the time.

With U-M's defense forcing three straight Nittany Lion punts to begin the third quarter, Charbonnet helped the Wolverines creep even closer when he scored on another 12-yard touchdown run at 1:05 of the frame, trimming the margin to 21-14.

The Maize and Blue did not wilt following a PSU touchdown early in the game's

final frame that stretched its lead back to 28-14, stringing together a nine-play, 75-yard drive that was capped off with a one-yard quarterback sneak by senior Shea Patterson on a fourth-and-goal play.

A massive scrum occurred at the goal line on the sneak, and the play had to be reviewed. With no clear evidence to overturn it, the call on the field stood.

Michigan held onto the game's momentum when its defense forced a Nittany Lion three-and-out, once again giving the ball back to the offense for a potential game-tying drive with 6:54 remaining.

U-M began its series at the PSU 47-yard line and advanced to the Penn State three-yard line, but Patterson's fourth-and-goal pass to sophomore wideout Ronnie Bell in the end zone was dropped with just 2:01 remaining.

A touchdown would have knotted the game at 28, but PSU's offense was instead able to pick up a crucial first down on its ensuing series, ending the game in the process.

"Offensively, we played a whole 60 minutes," junior center Cesar Ruiz said in the postgame. "We didn't give up, and we did what we had to do. We came out trying to execute the plays the best we possibly could, and we had the fight in us.

"We played hard on every single play. We played strong, tried to minimize all the mistakes and I thought we made a big jump."

### **Patterson Impressive In 276-Yard Passing Performance**

Patterson's passing statistics may not jump off the page (24-of-41 passing for 276 yards with no touchdowns and a pick), but the senior played like a veteran and made critical plays in the second half when the club needed him most.

Accuracy had been an issue for him for much of the season, but his throws were consistently on the money, and he actually chipped in 34 yards on the ground as well (his most since accumulating 68 last November against Indiana).

Michigan's crucial nine-play, 75-yard touchdown drive in the fourth quarter that cut PSU's lead to 28-21 began with the senior connecting on pass plays of 13 and 15 yards to junior wideout Nico Collins and redshirt junior tight end Nick Eubanks, respectively.

Patterson later hit Bell on a 35-yard completion on a third-and-four play that took U-M down to the PSU 6-yard line, with the series later ending on the one-yard quarterback sneak.

Though the Maize and Blue did not score on their final possession of the game, Patterson made another vital completion when he hit freshman tight end Erick All for 10 yards on a third-and-six play that took U-M down to the PSU 7-yard line with just 3:36 remaining.

In all, the signal-caller found seven different pass catchers on Saturday (Collins, Bell, junior wideout Donovan Peoples-Jones, Eubanks, redshirt sophomore receiver Tarik Black, All and Charbonnet), and has actually connected with at least five different targets in every game this season.

His 276 passing yards, meanwhile, were tied (with the Rutgers contest earlier this

year) for the second most he had thrown for in a game during his time at Michigan, only trailing the 282 he accumulated in last season's 42-21 win over Maryland.

Patterson's 41 attempts were the most he had ever logged in the winged helmet, beating out the 36 he had against Florida in last season's Peach Bowl.

"I felt safe back there," the senior noted. "I felt like I was in rhythm the whole night. The O-line did a heck of a job.

"I felt like I had plenty of time, and that opened up the running game a little bit with Zach Charbonnet. He had a good night on the ground."

### **More Michigan Football Offense Notes**

- Michigan became the first team to score more than 13 points on Penn State this season. The Nittany Lions had been the first club since Louisville in 2013 to limit each of their first six opponents to 13 points or fewer.

- Following his 81-yard effort, Charbonnet has now rushed for at least 81 yards in four of the team's seven games, including a season-best 116 last week at Illinois.

- Collins' six receptions tied for his most in a contest, while his 89 yards were his second-best effort in a game. The only time the junior had tallied more yards was last year at Ohio State when he had 91.

- PSU had been averaging 4.5 sacks per game entering the weekend, but only registered one against Michigan.

- U-M did not fumble on Saturday, marking the first time all year it did not put the ball on the ground at least once in a game.

- Senior running back Tru Wilson did not play, while redshirt freshman running back Christian Turner only saw action on special teams.

- Senior tight end Sean McKeon did not see the field either on Saturday, despite returning from injury last weekend and receiving four offensive snaps against the Illini.

- All's 10-yard reception on a third-and-six play with 3:36 remaining in the game was the first catch of his career.

- Charbonnet's two-touchdown night gave him seven scores on the season, with only Mike Hart and Tyrone Wheatley (nine each) compiling more in their freshman seasons at Michigan.

- Bell finished with 82 yards on five catches, including a long of 35. He now has at least one reception of 20 or more yards in five of the U-M's seven games this year and has also registered at least 81 receiving yards in five contests.

- PSU had been allowing 8.2 points per game (second best in the country), 259.7 yards per outing (fourth) and 1.59 yards per carry (first) entering Saturday, but allowed U-M's offense to rack up 21 points, 417 yards and 3.4 yards per rushing attempt.

- The Wolverines had three touchdown drives of 65 yards or longer, with each of them taking 4:27 or less — one on eight plays for 75 yards, another in eight plays for 65 yards and a third in nine plays for 75 yards.

## Defense/Special Teams Notes: U-M's Defense Clamps Down In Second Half

Austin Fox • TheWolverine

The Michigan Wolverines' football defense got off to a rough start on Saturday night, yielding 21 points and 203 yards of offense to Penn State in the first half alone.

However, the unit completely shut down the Nittany Lion attack after the break.

Michigan surrendered just seven points and 80 yards of offense in the game's final two quarters, and consistently got the ball back into the offense's hands.

PSU's 283 yards overall were a season-low, with the club having racked up at least 357 yards in five of its six games entering the weekend.

The Nittany Lions' first score of the night came on a 17-yard strike from redshirt sophomore quarterback Sean Clifford to sophomore tight end Pat Freiermuth at 5:59 of the first quarter, before the signal-caller found the end zone from two yards out to make the score 14-0 at 14:56 of the second frame.

A 25-yard TD pass from Clifford to redshirt sophomore wideout K.J. Hamler at 7:22 of the second quarter made the score 21-0, and it looked like Penn State was going to cruise.

Michigan's defense then forced five straight punts, including three three-and-outs.

The defensive success ended when Clifford hit Hamler on a 53-yard bomb at 13:14 of the fourth quarter to extend PSU's lead to 28-14, with more than half (62.4 percent) of the Nittany Lions' 83 second-half yards coming on that single play.

"They hit us on a long one in the first half, inside fade route, and they had a good call on there," head coach Jim Harbaugh explained. "They got K.J. on a safety and that was a good play. We didn't have the right defense and the players didn't get the call, so we didn't have a post safety.

"I thought we made good adjustments in the second half. I thought the defense played extremely well, did what they had to do, got the ball back for the offense and gave our team a chance to win."

Penn State was forced to punt on four of its six possessions after the break, with the lone exceptions being the score and the final drive of the game when it ran out the clock.

Michigan's defense also caused PSU to go three-and-out on six of its 13 possessions for the game.

"At halftime when we were down, we all came together to say we were going to keep fighting for the team," senior viper Khaleke Hudson revealed afterward. "We were going to do whatever we had to do — fight, scratch and crawl to come out with the victory.

"I'm really proud of the offense, and I'm also proud of our defense, how we came out in the second half. Unfortunately, we didn't come out on top."

**Jake Moody Unsuccessful On 58-Yard Field Goal Attempt**

With 51 seconds remaining in the second quarter and U-M trailing 21-7 and facing a fourth-and-six from the PSU 41-yard line, Harbaugh elected to try a 58-yard field goal.

Sophomore kicker Jake Moody's attempt was accurate but came up well short, causing many to ask why redshirt junior Quinn Nordin (who has the stronger leg) wasn't the one sent out.

"Quinn was working through something physically," Harbaugh revealed. "I thought we could make it. It was right at that line where we could make it and it's a long field goal, but it was either that or go for it on fourth down, so we decided to kick it.

"I thought Jake made a heck of a kick, but it just came up a yard or two short."

Junior wideout Donovan Peoples-Jones experienced a busy night on punt returns, meanwhile, fielding five of them but only compiling 12 yards.

Redshirt junior Will Hart averaged 46 yards on five punts, recording a 51-yarder while dropping another one inside the opposing 20-yard line.

### More Michigan Football Notes

- Michigan's lead in the all-time series over PSU dropped to 14-9, with its record at Beaver Stadium descending to 7-6.
  - Saturday's contest broke a string of five straight noon games for the Wolverines, with the last non-noon kickoff occurring in the Aug. 31 season-opener against Middle Tennessee State (a 7:30 p.m. start).
  - U-M held Penn State to 4 of 13 (30.7 percent) on third downs, which was well below the club's conversion rate of 44.1 percent entering the weekend.
  - Redshirt freshman linebacker Cam McGrone and senior linebacker Josh Uche each recorded one sack, while the former also added 2.5 tackles for loss and the latter one stop behind the line of scrimmage.
  - Michigan's defense did not force a turnover for just the second time in a game all year, with the loss at Wisconsin being the only other time. The Maize and Blue had registered six takeaways in their last two games entering the weekend.
  - Junior defensive end Kwity Paye's 10 tackles were a career best and four more than any other Wolverine defender on Saturday.
  - The seven-point Penn State win marked the closest game in the series since U-M took down the Nittany Lions, 18-13, in 2014. From 2015-18, the victor in the matchup won by an average of 28.7 points. The home team has now won four in a row.
  - Junior linebacker Josh Ross missed his fourth straight game with injury, and has not played since the Sept. 21 loss at Wisconsin.
  - Saturday's setback was Michigan's third straight to an AP top-25 team on the road, with its last victory occurring at No. 24 Michigan State last season on Oct. 20.
- The squad has not beaten an AP top-10 team on the road since it won at No. 2 Notre Dame, 47-21, in 2006.

# Wolverine Watch: Comeback Cut Short Is A Killer For U-M Hopes

John Borton • TheWolverine

The thud heard 'round the college football world late Saturday night confirmed disasters happen in threes.

First, the Sooner Schooner rolled over, sending its occupants tumbling down a turf prairie. Next, Wisconsin took its undefeated roll and chucked it away at Illinois, in the upset of the season thus far.

Finally, Michigan played itself out of a Big Ten championship, barely into the season's second half.

It didn't have to happen. It nearly didn't. Hand anybody a stat sheet without a final score, and they'd swear the Wolverines stole a win in a whiteout at No. 7 Penn State. They'd be convinced Jim Harbaugh's team rocketed into the back half of its year 6-1 and still in control of its own destiny.

Not so. It would have taken a miracle comeback for the Wolverines to dig out of the 21-0 hole they and a whiteout-wooded officiating crew dug in Beaver Stadium. The miracle stopped three yards shy of the goal line.

When senior quarterback Shea Patterson's pass went off sophomore wideout Ronnie Bell's hands in the end zone, U-M's last, best chance went with it.

"Any time you're down 21-0, especially at Penn State in a whiteout, I was proud of our guys," Patterson said. "The defense held them to one touchdown the whole entire second half, and I just love the way our offense fought back."

The head coach didn't love the flag equity in Beaver Stadium and made that clear. Harbaugh insisted it will be "interesting" to compare calls on both sides during video sessions in the days to come.

He did not say the crew that worked the game looked like refugees from the Detroit Lions-Green Bay Packers game six days earlier. But Michigan fans looking on might have shouted precisely that at their televisions.

Junior wideout Nico Collins make a long reception, only to be called for offensive pass interference, when Penn State tight end Pat Freiermuth gets nothing after what Harbaugh thought was a pushoff on the game's opening touchdown. Redshirt sophomore Tarik Black gets jostled on a fourth-down drop in Penn State territory on the subsequent series, and the flags stay put.

Penn State's eventual game-winner, a 53-yard TD bomb to wideout KJ Hamler, occurs after an apparent three-and-out. It wasn't one, because the Nittany Lions received a yellow laundry drive extension, courtesy of a defensive holding call on senior cornerback Lavert Hill.

Harbaugh said he thought Michigan receivers were getting tackled on their final, ill-fated drive. Bell clearly took early contact from behind when he couldn't hang onto the ball on Michigan's final, crucial offensive play.

Michigan committed the only turnover of the game, on an interception thrown by Patterson. But a near-pick by junior safety Brad Hawkins drew Harbaugh's ire again.

"Be interesting to see the lineman downfield on the one they called on us that took off a touchdown, compared to, especially, the one that stands out in my mind, Hawkins going for an interception and the guard knocking it away," Harbaugh said.

You get the idea. The Wolverines' boss saw some Peachy Paterno-style home cooking. On a night when his team nearly pulled off its greatest comeback, that hurt.

"It's very frustrating," junior defensive end Kwity Paye acknowledged. "We worked so hard. Someone makes a huge play, and we look back and see the flag on the ground. It's heartbreaking to give them another opportunity to put the ball into the end zone."

But they did put it there, four times. Michigan put it there three, and came this close to another. They didn't. One-hundred years from now, the game will appear 28-21 in the record books, sans commentary.

That's the cold reality. It's colder still for the Wolverines, who talked bravely afterwards but who know what likely slipped away.

Penn State could lose two in the weeks to come, with tough road games to play. The Nittany Lions aren't going to lose three, unless the team bus gets lost in the mountains trying to leave Happy Valley.

Ohio State isn't losing two, barring a six-week flu outbreak in Columbus. That leaves the Wolverines — who did plenty right battling back in the second half — playing for pride in rivalry games.

That's not nothing, and for now, it's all the Wolverines have.

"We're not going to sit down and feel sorry for ourselves," Paye assured. "We still have a lot of big teams to play. We have Notre Dame, ranked team; Ohio State, ranked team. There is still plenty of opportunity to go out and finish the season great."

But the Wolverine Schooner isn't headed for Indianapolis. Seven games in, that feels like drawing the dysentery card in The Oregon Trail game.

# What They're Saying: Michigan Wolverines Football 28, Penn State 21

Ryan Tice • TheWolverine

A look around the web at what they're saying about the Michigan Wolverines' 28-21 loss on the road at Penn State:

**Chris Balas, *TheWolverine.com: Notes, Quotes & Observations From Michigan's 28-21 loss***

The Wolverines seemed overwhelmed by both an unbelievable crowd and a fired up Penn State team, making many of the same mistakes that plagued them all year.

There were a handful of dead ball penalties on both sides, another handful of dropped passes that simply can't happen if you're going to beat a top-10 team on the road. They occurred with regularity in the first quarter and ended Michigan drives while keeping Penn State's alive.

Junior Donovan Peoples-Jones dropped a second-down throw on U-M's second drive that would have given Michigan field position. Instead, PSU got the ball back on a punt and scored.

Dropped passes helped stall another drive, and two offsides penalties on the Wolverines inside the 5 gift wrapped a second score, and "here we go again" was back in full force after a phantom offensive pass interference penalty on junior Nico Collins negated a huge gain deep in PSU territory.

That one was followed by one of senior quarterback Shea Patterson's few bad plays, an intercepted screen pass that quickly turned a potential 14-7 game just seconds earlier into a three-touchdown deficit when PSU quarterback Sean Clifford went up top over a safety to receiver KJ Hamler, the one guy U-M couldn't afford to let beat them.

Frankly, it was how many predicted the game would go. When the same mistakes are made through six games, why should anyone have expected anything different against one of the top defensive teams they'd faced all year?

**Rainer Sabin, *Detroit Free Press: Michigan football's Jim Harbaugh close, but fails to deliver in another big game***

In a world where coaches are judged by their records, it would seem Jim Harbaugh would be viewed favorably by the masses. At Michigan, he is now 43-16, a winning percentage of .728.

But it's not that simple when it comes to evaluating Harbaugh.

His Wolverines teams have developed a reputation of shrinking on the biggest stages. Under Harbaugh, U-M is now 1-10 against top 10 opponents and 0-8 when it has been the underdog. For that reason, the Wolverines seemed doomed before they even arrived in Happy Valley.

On Saturday, the Wolverines fell behind, 21-0, and then stormed back with a chance to tie the score late in the fourth quarter. But a dropped pass by Ronnie Bell sealed

Michigan's fate and kept Harbaugh from achieving one of his greatest victories as the Wolverines coach. The narrative about Harbaugh's struggles in consequential games will persist. But U-M showed resilience and the kind of mettle that could help Harbaugh achieve a breakthrough against an elite team in the very near future.

**Orion Sang, *Detroit Free Press: Michigan football comes up brutally short in 28-21 loss at Penn State***

Michigan's season is on the brink. With two conference losses, the Wolverines might be too far behind in the Big Ten race to catch up. Their playoff hopes have effectively been extinguished. And they've missed another opportunity to win a big game on the road, falling to 1-8 under Harbaugh against ranked teams away from home.

Yet Michigan still showed something that it hadn't previously this season.

It has enough fight and resolve to test an unbeaten top-10 team on the road. The offense offered a glimmer of hope moving forward against a fast and talented defense. The Wolverines outgained Penn State, 417 to 283. They converted 12 more first downs (26-14). They held the ball for 15:30 minutes more than the Nittany Lions. On multiple occasions after the game, Harbaugh praised his team's character.

Yet Michigan didn't come ahead in the most important category: the win-loss column. And it'll have to try and grapple with that in the coming days.

"I'm not gonna sit down and feel sorry for ourselves," said defensive end Kwity Paye. "We still have a lot of big teams to play — we have Notre Dame, a ranked team, Ohio State, a ranked team. There's still plenty of opportunity to be able to go out and finish the season great."

**Angelique Chengelis, *The Detroit News: 'A lot of good things': Michigan offense shows signs of life in loss to Penn State***

For the first time this season, Michigan's offense looked like it had found consistency and a rhythm that had been lacking the first six games.

The Wolverines dominated statistically at Penn State, however, they could not pull off the upset and fell, 28-21, Saturday night at Beaver Stadium. Michigan had a chance to tie the score with just less than two minutes left but a dropped pass in the end zone on fourth down left them empty-handed.

It was the best overall performance this season by the Michigan offensive line and quarterback Shea Patterson. Freshman Zach Charbonnet ran hard and scored two touchdowns, and despite five drops in the first half, the receivers came through with big plays.

"I thought the offense did a lot of really good things tonight," Michigan coach Jim Harbaugh said. "Offensive line pass protection was really good. I thought Shea had a really good night throwing the football and receivers making catches. Chipped away at the running game and got that going, as well. I thought the defense played really well in the second half. A lot of good things to learn from and grow from."

**Tom Fornelli, *CBSSports.com: Penn State vs. Michigan takeaways***

The Wolverines aren't looking for moral victories here. This loss is a killer when it

comes to the Big Ten East title race, as well as dreams of a Big Ten title. That doesn't mean there's nothing good to come from it, however. Michigan's offense seemed to find a consistency in the final 35 minutes of this game that it hadn't shown much of this season. It's well-known that Michigan is transitioning to a new offense this season, but it's also easy to forget that those transitions aren't always simple. Just because LSU dove in headfirst and started ripping the galaxy apart at the seams doesn't mean every offense will. A few years ago, the Penn State team that Michigan played tonight made a similar change on offense and sputtered in the first half of the season before finding a rhythm in the second half. It's possible we saw the start of that for Michigan tonight.

To be blunt, Shea Patterson looked rattled to start this game. It might have been the Penn State crowd, or it could have been the Penn State pass rush. It was likely a mixture of both. But whatever it was, he looked like someone who would prefer to be anywhere else in the world other than the pocket. Then Michigan put a touchdown drive together before halftime, and Patterson relaxed. He kept his composure in the second half as well, and instead of panicking, he found Michigan's skill players in space, and they did the work. Patterson's final stat line doesn't look very good (24/41, 276 yards, 1 INT), but the numbers don't say it all. When Michigan needed its starting QB to put together a drive late in the game to tie it, Patterson did so. On fourth-and-goal, with the game on the line, Patterson bought time and found an open receiver in the end zone. The ball was dropped. That happens. But if Patterson continues to play like he did in the second half for the rest of the season, and Zach Charbonnet can continue to find room to maneuver in the run game, this Michigan offense is going to look a lot different over the second half.

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