

Men's Basketball Season in Review

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Valentine Earns National Player of the Year Honors:

Michigan State's Denzel Valentine was named the Associated Press (AP) and National Association of Basketball Coaches (NABC) National Player of the Year, becoming the sixth Big Ten standout in the past seven years to earn National Player of the Year plaudits. Other Big Ten national players of the year in the last seven seasons were Ohio State's Evan Turner in 2010, Michigan State's Draymond Green in 2012, Indiana's Victor Oladipo and Michigan's Trey Burke in 2013 and Wisconsin's Frank Kaminsky in 2015.

Uthoff Named Academic All-American of the Year:

Iowa's Jarrod Uthoff was named the 2015-16 Academic All-American of the Year for Division I Men's Basketball. Nebraska's Shavon Shields repeated as a first-team Academic All-American, while the Hawkeyes' Mike Gesell earned second-team Academic All-America honors. Shields and Gesell became the 14th and 15th players in Big Ten history to claim at least two Academic All-America honors. Along with Uthoff, Gesell and Shields, Michigan State's Colby Wollenmann was also named Academic All-District prior to the Academic All-America teams being announced.

Valentine a Consensus All-American:

Michigan State's Denzel Valentine earned consensus All-America laurels, becoming the eighth Big Ten player in the past six years to claim consensus All-American recognition. Other Big Ten consensus honorees in the last six years were Ohio State's Jared Sullinger and Purdue's JaJuan Johnson in 2011, Sullinger and Michigan State's Draymond Green in 2012, Indiana's Victor Oladipo and Michigan's Trey Burke in 2013 and Wisconsin's Frank Kaminsky in 2015.

All-America Recognition:

Indiana's Yogi Ferrell was named to the Wooden Award All-America Team and earned second-team All-America plaudits from the Sporting News and third-team recognition by the AP and NABC. Iowa's Jarrod Uthoff was tabbed a second-team All-American by the Sporting News and USBWA, and claimed third-team honors by the AP and NABC. Maryland's Melo Trimble and Purdue's A.J. Hammons were tabbed AP honorable mention All-America selections.

Valentine Wins Senior CLASS Award:

Michigan State's Denzel Valentine was selected as the 2015-16 Senior CLASS Award winner in NCAA Division I men's basketball. To be eligible for the award, a student-athlete must be classified as an NCAA Division I senior and have notable achievements in four areas of excellence: classroom, community, character and competition.

Shields Named to Good Works Team:

Nebraska's Shavon Shields became the first Husker men's basketball player named to the Allstate NABC Good Works Team. The award, which is in its fourth year, honors college basketball athletes that have dedicated themselves to bettering the lives of others through giving back to their communities.

Seven Teams Selected for NCAA Tournament:

Seven Big Ten teams were selected to the NCAA Tournament, marking the ninth time in the last 11 years that the conference has had six or more teams in the bracket and the eighth straight year the Big Ten has had five or more teams advance to the NCAA Tournament. Michigan State received the conference's automatic bid after winning the Big Ten Tournament, while Indiana, Iowa, Maryland, Michigan, Purdue and Wisconsin received at-large berths.

Now That's Sweet:

Indiana, Maryland and Wisconsin advanced to the Regional Semifinals, marking the ninth straight year the Big Ten has sent multiple teams to the Sweet 16.

Izzo Elected to Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame:

Michigan State head coach Tom Izzo was elected to the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame, as announced at the Final Four in April. In 21 seasons as a head coach, all at Michigan State, Izzo has put together a resume worthy of induction. He has guided Michigan State to seven Final Fours (1999, 2000, 2001, 2005, 2009, 2010, 2015), ranking fifth all-time and tied for third among active coaches.

Gard Takes Over as Badgers' Interim Coach, Earns Full-Time Coaching Role:

Wisconsin's Greg Gard, who took over the interim coaching reins from former mentor Bo Ryan in December 2015, had the interim tag removed and was named the 16th head men's basketball coach in Badgers' history on March 7 in advance of the Big Ten Tournament. Gard led Wisconsin to a 12-6 Big Ten record as interim head coach, including a tie for third place in the Big Ten standings and extending the Badgers' streak of top-four finishes to a conference-record 16th consecutive season.

Gard Named Jim Phelan National Coach of the Year:

Wisconsin's Greg Gard was named the 2016 Jim Phelan National Coach of the Year. The Phelan award, which is presented annually to the nation's top Division I men's basketball coach, is named in honor of the legendary coach who spent his entire career at Mount Saint Mary's University. The Jim Phelan award committee is a 30-member panel, consisting of five current Division I head coaches, five retired head coaches, 10 current athletic directors and/or conference administrators, five members of the national media and five Colleg Insider.com staff members.

Ferrell Named to East Region All-Tournament Team:

Indiana's Yogi Ferrell was named to the NCAA Tournament East Region All-Tournament Team. The Big Ten boasts 23 NCAA All-Regional team honors in the last five years.

Big Ten Champions:

Indiana finished the Big Ten season with a 15-3 record, clinching its first outright Big Ten Championship since the 2012-13 season. The Hoosiers have matched a conference record with 22 Big Ten Championships. Indiana also earned the top seed in the Big Ten Tournament for the first time since 2013.

Michigan State Wins Tournament Title:

Michigan State captured the Big Ten Tournament title in Indianapolis, defeating Ohio State in the quarterfinals, Maryland in the semifinal round and Purdue in the championship game. It marked the Spartans' fifth Big Ten Tournament title.

Final Rankings:

The Big Ten was well-represented in the final USA Today Coaches Top 25 poll with six teams ranked among the top 25 and a pair of top-10 squads. Michigan State finished the season ranked No. 7 in the poll, followed by No. 9 Indiana, No. 12 Maryland, No. 19 Purdue, No. 23 Wisconsin and No. 25 Iowa.

Nine Big Ten Teams Boast 20 or More Triumphs:

The Big Ten set a record with nine teams recording 20 or more wins during the 2015-16 season, marking the 10th consecutive year that at least six Big Ten squads surpassed the 20-wins milestone.

Crean Collects District Coach of the Year Honors:

Indiana's Tom Crean was named the NABC District 7 Coach of the Year and District V honors by the USBWA. Crean guided the Hoosiers to the outright Big Ten Championship and a berth in the Sweet 16 of the NCAA Tournament.

Big Ten Standouts Garner All-District Honors:

Eleven Big Ten players were named All-District performers by the NABC and USBWA:

NABC

District 7 First Team

Jarrod Uthoff, Iowa
Yogi Ferrell, Indiana
Melo Trimble, Maryland
Denzel Valentine, Michigan State
A.J. Hammons, Purdue

District 7 Second Team

Malcolm Hill, Illinois
Peter Jok, Iowa
Robert Carter, Maryland
Matt Costello, Michigan State
Nigel Hayes, Wisconsin

USBWA - District V

PLAYER OF THE YEAR: Denzel Valentine, Michigan State
COACH OF THE YEAR: Tom Crean, Indiana

District III Team

Melo Trimble, Maryland

District V Team

Malcolm Hill, Illinois
Yogi Ferrell, Indiana
Bryn Forbes, Michigan State
Denzel Valentine, Michigan State
A.J. Hammons, Purdue
Nigel Hayes, Wisconsin

District VI Team

Peter Jok, Iowa
Jarrod Uthoff, Iowa

Big Ten Standouts:

The 2015-16 All-Big Ten teams and individual award winners were announced in advance of the Big Ten Tournament. Michigan State's Denzel Valentine earned Big Ten Player of the Year honors from the conference's coaches and a media panel. Indiana's Tom Crean claimed Coach of the Year laurels from both the media and his peers. Wisconsin's Ethan Happ picked up Freshman of the Year accolades in both ballots. Purdue's A.J. Hammons was named the Defensive Player of the Year and Indiana's Max Bielfeldt was voted the Sixth Man of the Year by the coaches.

We Are the (Stat) Champions:

Several standouts secured statistical titles in Big Ten conference games only during the 2015-16 season:

- With 20.5 points per game, Michigan State's Denzel Valentine became the first Spartan since Marcus Taylor in 2001-02 to lead the conference in scoring.
- Michigan State's Matt Costello became the fourth Spartan in the past eight years to lead the Big Ten in rebounding with 10.1 boards per contest, joining Goran Suton in 2008-09, Draymond Green in 2011-12 and Branden Dawson in 2014-15.
- The Spartans' Denzel Valentine paced the Big Ten with 7.8 assists per outing, becoming the first Big Ten player to lead the conference in both scoring and assists in conference games only since Michigan's Trey Burke in 2012-13. Valentine also paced the Big Ten in both categories in all games, becoming the first conference player to pace the Big Ten in scoring and assists over a full season since Iowa's Andre Woolridge in 1996-97.
- Wisconsin's Ethan Happ led the conference with 2.4 steals per game, becoming the first freshman to pace the conference in the category since Ohio State's Aaron Craft in 2010-11.
- Iowa's Jarrod Uthoff led the conference with 2.6 blocks per game, becoming the first Hawkeye to earn the annual statistical title since Erik Hansen in 2005-06.
- Michigan State's Bryn Forbes converted a conference-best 66 three-point field goals, the third-most in Big Ten history, and the most since Northwestern's Craig Moore made 66 threes in the 2008-09 season.
- Indiana's Thomas Bryant led the Big Ten with a 68.4 field goal percentage, becoming the fifth freshmen in the past eight seasons to pace the conference in the category in conference games only.

Ohio State Collects NIT Bid:

Ohio State earned a No. 3 seed in the 2016 National Invitation Tournament. The Fighting Illini dropped a second round decision against Florida after defeating Akron in the opening round.

Among the Nation's Best:

Several Big Ten teams finished the season ranked among the top 10 in the nation in various statistical categories. Michigan State led the nation in assists per game (20.5), rebound margin (+11.4 rpg) and three-point field goal percentage (.434) and ranked second in scoring margin (+15.7 ppg), assist/turnover ratio (1.73) and field goal percentage defense (.382). Indiana was third in in field goal percentage (.502) while Purdue ranked third in the nation in rebound margin (+10.5 rpg). Northwestern committed just 10.3 turnovers per contest, which tied for the sixth-lowest mark in the nation. Maryland ranked eighth in the country with a 76.9 free throw percentage, while Indiana was eighth in three-point field goal percentage at 41.6. The Hoosiers ranked eighth in the nation in three-point field goals made with 345, while Michigan was ninth at 342.

Academic All-Big Ten:

Thirty-two Big Ten standouts earned [Academic All-Big Ten](#) honors.

Big Ten Medal of Honor:

As of May 5, three Big Ten players had earned the Big Ten Medal of Honor: Indiana's Nick Zeisloft, Iowa's Mike Gesell and Nebraska's Shavon Shields. The conference's most exclusive award was the first of its kind in intercollegiate athletics to recognize academic and athletic excellence. The Big Ten Medal of Honor was first awarded in 1915 to one student from the graduating class of each university who had "attained the greatest proficiency in athletics and scholastic work."