



The Cavs were granted the 7:30 slot on NBA TV for their Wednesday evening match-up against the Philadelphia 76ers. Things got off to a good start when the Cavs held their own against the 76ers in the first quarter. The second quarter began with a 28-27 Philadelphia lead and it ballooned to a 66-41 halftime lead for the home team. The Cavs actually outscored the 76ers by 10 points in the 1st, 3rd and 4th quarters yet they still lost by a final score of 113-99. The results of the second quarter turned out to be an insurmountable lead for Philadelphia.

Many things went wrong in during that quarter for the Cavs. First and foremost, they could not score the ball. Cleveland shot 28.6% from the field during that stretch. They missed all four of their three pointers and made only two out of eight free throw attempts. Byron Scott substituted the second unit for much of the second quarter and the they struggled to score, defend and rebound. In fact, Philadelphia pulled down 19 rebounds compared to Cleveland's 7.

Philadelphia scored on 60.9% of their second quarter possessions, assisted on 9 baskets and got to the line 12 times en route to 38 points. The 76ers even took their lead to 26 points during the quarter. The Cavs are a young team with a lot of new pieces, but it is unreasonable for any team with as many high lottery picks and a former Coach of the Year manning the sidelines to be that far in the red before halftime even occurs.

Dion Waiters once again struggled from the field. Byron Scott played the rookie for almost 27 minutes, which is a welcome change. Waiters has struggled throughout the entire preseason, but it is important for the Cavs to invest as much coaching as they can to make things work with him. Waiters scored 5 points on 2-9 shooting and missed all 5 of his three point attempts. One of his skills which had the Cavs enamored with him is his ability to drive. For some reason, we haven't seen much of that thus far. One possible explanation is the superior NBA defense compared to that in NCAA and the Summer League. Whatever the reason is, Waiters needs to get back to doing what he is good at and make the most of his skills. It is hard to justify seeing him take 5 three point shots in any game.

One note of interest is that this game featured more of a regular season rotation than we have been getting thus far in the preseason. Byron Scott still went 14 players deep, but that can be partially accounted for by the fact that the game was a blowout. If this game is any indication, Scott will play a 10 man rotation with Omri Casspi, Jeremy Pargo, Samardo Samuels and Luke Walton being the odd men out. Of course, this could all change due to the nature of the preseason.

Kyrie Irving spent the night being aggressive offensively and not really looking to setup his teammates. Irving finished the night 23 points on an efficient 8-16 shooting. Irving had only 2 assists. We all know that Irving can shoot and is a dynamic offensive player. He is a very good passer because he can read lanes and has a good sense of passing angles. However, it would be nice to see him showcase those talents more often than he currently is. The Cavs don't really have any great offensive players outside of Irving, but that doesn't mean that it should be acceptable to see Irving only get credited for 2 assists in almost 28 minutes of playing time.

Speaking of shots, CJ Miles loves to take them. Miles took 15 shots, which was second most for the team. The seven year veteran is more of a finished product than every other wing player on the roster, but the Cavs should spend the preseason developing young guys like Dion Waiters. It may be frustrating to see Dion Waiters shoot 22% from the field, but this is the best time for him to work on finding his shot and getting acclimated to the professional game. Like I've said many times, the Cavs lost a lot of games to earn the right to draft Dion Waiters. Because of this, he should be getting more shots and opportunities to develop his skills than veterans who have reached their ceiling.

Things were much better on the 76ers side of things. They played without newly-acquired all star Andrew Bynum and did not skip a beat. Rookie undrafted guard Maalik Wayns came off the bench and scored 19 points in an efficient 23 minutes. Lavoy Allen, who was ranked as "the worst player in the NBA" by ESPN in 2011 had 8 points and 11 rebounds. A lot of the guys who

made a difference for Philadelphia were not high lottery picks. In fact, they have guys who can help win games who were undrafted. These are the sorts of acquisitions that general managers should strive for. Almost any general manager can get the first overall pick and draft an elite player, but it takes skill to round out a roster with guys like Lavoy Allen and Maalik Wayns.

The Cavs are back at it against the Indiana Pacers on Tuesday night. Tipoff is at 7:00.