



Honeymoon's over, folks. Despite the warm fuzzies we all got from that win over an anonymous, shorthanded Wizards team on Tuesday, your 2012/2013 Cavaliers revealed that they may in fact have some obstacles still left to overcome on their way to an NBA title this season. In quite possibly the lowest cumulative decibel game in the history of the Q's "Get Loud" meter, it was Chicago 115, Cleveland 86.

Man it was quiet! In fact, just exclaiming, "man, it was quiet" feels like painfully abrasive noise compared to the ambient Eno album that was Quicken Loans Arena during this entire ballgame. Credit the Bulls (2-0). They muzzled the crowd from the jump ball (it was 7-0 before most people sat down) and held that sucker on there for the next 48 minutes. Yes, Derrick Rose is hurt. Yes, this makes Chicago a less intimidating team. But if you really thought the Cavs (1-1) could roll up on proven pros like Noah, Boozer, Deng, and Hamilton like they were the equivalents of the bum parade out of Washington, you were playing a cruel joke on yourself.

It's going to take a hell of a lot more than 2 games to determine if the much criticized Dion Waiters pick was a Dajuan Wagner caliber disaster or not. But tonight, it's probably enough to say the youngster didn't distinguish himself. After stroking a three-pointer to cut the lead to 11-10 four minutes into the game, Waiters only managed two more buckets the rest of the night, finishing 3-for-7 with 7 points and 4 assists. Meanwhile, Chicago replied to that Waiters triple by outscoring Cleveland 25-6 for the rest of the first quarter—absolutely massacring the Cavs on easy scores off turnovers. Cleveland only wound up with 17 turnovers on the night, but more than half of those came in the first frame, and they pretty much determined the course of things in short order.

Unlike the Wizards, who recklessly hurled up three after three on Tuesday, Chicago smartly played their matchups and dominated the paint all night, including holding the combination of Anderson Varejao and Tristan Thompson to just 5 rebounds a piece (after the pair totaled 33 combined boards in the opener). The Bulls only attempted 10 long balls in the game, focusing instead on penetration and good interior ball movement. The always delightful Carlos Boozer was particularly efficient, scoring a game-high 19 points on 7-of-11 shooting along with 7 rebounds and 6 assists. Rip Hamilton matched him with 19 points on 8-of-12 shooting, Deng had 14 on 5-of-8, Noah had 10 on 4-of-6, and friggin' Nate Robinson dropped 16 points on 7-of-9 shooting (not to mention 12 dimes in 27 stupidly electrifying minutes off the Bulls bench). Perhaps you have noticed that every single Bull appears to have shot a very high percentage tonight? Well, it's no illusion. How does SIXTY-FOUR PERCENT shooting as a team sound to you?

The Cavaliers are not very good at playing defense.



Already trailing by 20+ in the second quarter, Byron Scott turned to the respected veteran presence of Luke Walton once again, as it appears the second generation Deadhead is actually going to be part of the regular rotation this year. Joy! Meanwhile, Bulls coach Tom Thibodeau responded to the Walton maneuver by feeding the talented Taj Gibson for several consecutive easy looks down low, as Luke helplessly flailed his arms and crumbled beneath the overwhelming enormity of the mismatch. Halftime score: 60-35.

The Cavaliers are not very good at playing offense.

Typically, a game of this sort features the inevitable come back attempt or two, as the superior team starts losing focus a bit, daydreaming about their mistresses or their DVRing schedule for the week. There would be no runs in this contest, however-- not even a faux-run or a mini-run or a light jog, even. Thanks to a suffocating defense that left even the wizarding ways of Kyrie Irving mostly ineffective (15 points, 4 assists, 4 turnovers), the Bulls just clamped down and forbid any light from shining into those little Cavalier hearts.

This also means it's nearly impossible to find the obligatory "bright spots" from the ruins of this shellacking. It took a late flourish of threes for the Cavs to even manage shooting 40% on the night (and again, remember that Chicago shot SIXTY FOUR PERCENT). Alonzo Gee and Varejao each added 12 points, and C.J. Miles scored 8 off the bench (albeit on a piss poor 3-for-11 effort). The young bigs Tristan Thompson (6 pts, 5 rbs) and Tyler Zeller (8 pts, 2 rbs) each looked like awkward giraffes in amongst the elephants. I still have hopes for Zeller as a viable Zydrunas-like scorer, but he racked up three fouls in about three minutes in the first half—a trend that won't be helping his development.

Along with getting owned by Taj Gibson, Luke Walton also twirled off a stunning airball on a wide-open jumper. He ended up 0-for-3 and only booked four minutes. Something tells me Luke Walton is not going to be somebody we're discussing come 2013.

Anyway, what else? Omri Casspi hit a three! That's nice. That, and we start a hellacious road trip in Milwaukee tomorrow night. Just 80 more thrilling games to go before we find out which Kentucky All-American we're not getting in the draft.

