



With fear of the Mayan apocalypse finally in their rear view mirror, a relieved Cavalier squad marched into Milwaukee and beat the Bucks for the first time in ten tries, simultaneously ending a six game losing streak *and* a rather epic 17-game skid against divisional opponents. As a topper, Luke Walton was a key contributor off the bench in the 94-82 win, leading some to speculate that the end of the world is perhaps still imminent after all.

If it's excitement yee be seeking on this holiday weekend, Milwaukee—as is ever the case—would not be the place to find it. For several decades now, it has been generally agreed upon by the sports observing public that the Bucks are, in fact, the single least interesting franchise in the three major pro sports, rivaled only by the Jacksonville Jaguars and San Diego Padres. And yet, over the last few seasons, Wisconsin's forgettable, phantom-like NBA team has thoroughly dominated the hapless Cavaliers. Sure, you probably have less than sketchy memories of the nine straight wuppings the Bucks inflicted upon the Wine & Gold prior to this "pivotal" Central Division scrum, but a quick check of the stat book reveals two heartbreaking defeats this season alone, including a buzzer-beating three from Brandon Jennings to clinch a Bucks win in Milwaukee way back on November 3rd. That loss sent Cleveland's record under .500 for the first time this season, and they haven't looked back since.

Tonight, however, things would be different—if not particularly "entertaining." While the Cavs (6-23) were playing 24 hours after a home loss to Indiana, and the Bucks (14-12) were fresh off a hard-fought win over Boston, it was Milwaukee that came out looking lethargic on their home floor, falling behind 46-37 at the half and never really making a significant run after the break. November's hero, Brandon Jennings, was brutal from start to finish in this one, connecting on just 3-of-13 shots and 1-of-6 from downtown. This left basically the entire scoring burden on a

struggling Monta Ellis, who has been shooting at just a 36% clip in December. Fortunately for the Bucks, however, the site of Cleveland colors has historically transformed Ellis into the second coming of Earl Monroe, and tonight was no exception. While his teammates were just 16-for-52 (31%) from the field on the night, Monta shot 15-for-27 for a game-high 37 points.

Meanwhile, despite an injured Anderson Varejao resting his knee back in Cleveland, and his replacement—Tyler Zeller—missing his first TEN shot attempts on the night, the Cavaliers managed to overcome Ellis's big night and knock off a division foe for the first time since February 21.

The turning point was a 10-0 run to start the second quarter, highlighted by a three-pointer from the increasingly useful C.J. Miles (16 pts off the bench). From there, Cleveland countered the Bucks one-dimensional Monta show with a balanced attack, led by the at-least-temporarily healthy backcourt of Kyrie Irving (15 points and 4 assists in his boring new plastic mask) and Dion Waiters (a team high 18 points on 9-of-17 shooting). Tristan Thompson also picked up the slack for Andy with a solid 14 pts / 14 rebound effort in 37 minutes, and Zeller recovered from his ugly start to post a double-double of his own (11 pts, 10 rbs).

And who helped put the game on ice in the fourth quarter, you ask? Well, it was none other than the Deadhead progeny Luke Walton, who—despite looking mildly off-balance all night and eventually turning his ankle—actually provided a nice spark off the pine. In 24 minutes of action (his most in ages), Walton scored just 7 points on 3-of-9 shooting, but he racked up 6 boards, 3 steals, and 4 assists, including a kickout to Miles for a three that made it a 78-64 game and essentially buried the stumbling, airball-prone Bucks.

Cleveland will look to continue its post-apocalyptic road dominance on Boxing Day against the god awful Wizards in D.C. If they win that game, that will make two straight wins. And if they then beat the Hawks at home on Friday... well, boys, that's what they call a winning streak.