



At some point, the Cavs are going to need to win games. The rebuild is not nearly close to completion. There is a lot of talk by Cavs fans discussing a time frame. Many want the Cavs to be players in the lottery for another year and then to make the leap into the playoffs. With the way that the recent first round draft picks are playing, it may be time to put those playoff aspirations on hold for the foreseeable future.

Tristan Thompson is typically my scapegoat for his limited offensive game, but he has played fairly well in the five games that Anderson Varejao has been out of the lineup. I still do not consider Thompson an ideal player to have start on a playoff contender due to his offensive limitations, but he always plays hard and provides good defense. With experience and improvement, he could develop into a player who shoots a high percentage despite his poor offense.

On the other hand, Dion Waiters has officially made this blogger concerned. It is early in his career and he has only played in 23 games, but his shooting and shot selection are alarmingly bad. Dion Waiters shot 7-21 against the Atlanta Hawks on Friday night. This marked the tenth time in 23 games where the rookie shooting guard shot 33% or worse. Waiters has shot better than 50% from the field in only four games. One could make the argument that he is a young player who is confident and that the shots will eventually fall. Perhaps that is true. Until then, the Cavs used a very high lottery pick on a guy who shoots a lot and at a very poor clip. Until he corrects his significant flaws, Dion Waiters will not live up to his pre-draft expectations.

As far as the game goes, Kyrie Irving was spectacular. Irving scored 28 points, grabbed 6

rebounds, had 5 assists and 4 steals. Most impressive was the buzzer-beating 40 foot three point shot to end the first half despite being covered by what felt like the entire Atlanta Hawks squad defending him. As great as Irving was on the offensive end, he was at least partially responsible for giving up a career night to Jeff Teague. The fourth year point guard scored a career-high 27 points on only 19 shots.

Once again, the Cavs got off to a bad start. Finding themselves down 8-0 to start the game, it took an 11-2 run for the Cavs to make the score respectable. Despite the poor start, the Cavs found themselves with a 26-25 lead after the first quarter. The home team struggled for most of the second quarter, but used a 15-5 run to close out the half to pull the Cavs within 1 at the end of the quarter. The Cavs had no answers for Anthony Tolliver in the quarter. He scored 11 points and secured 4 rebounds in the second quarter.

The Cavs were within striking distance or leading for much of the game. It didn't matter because the Hawks went on a 9-0 run in the final 2:52 of the game. In fact, the Cavs found themselves up 94-93 after a Kyrie Irving driving layup with 2:53 remaining in the fourth quarter. At that moment, it seemed unlikely that the Cavs would find themselves losing the game by 8 points, but poor execution made that a reality.

The Cavs were without center Anderson Varejao for the fifth straight game with a knee contusion. The injuries continue to mount for the Cavs with Daniel Gibson sustaining a concussion in the second quarter. With Gibson possibly looking at some missed time, it may be a good idea to see what Shaun Livingston can do for the Cavs. Besides, it is not as if Jeremy Pargo has been overly-impressive recently.

The Cavs short-lived winning streak ended on Friday night, but they have a few winnable games coming up in the schedule. They travel to Brooklyn tomorrow, but then play the following two games against the Sacramento Kings and the Charlotte Bobcats. Things then take a turn for the worse after that because the Cavs play 8 of their 14 games in January on the road.