

Yeah, it was the Hawks. But it's an improved Hawks team that came into the Q early in the season and knocked us off in OT. In addition, the Cavs were riding a three game road losing streak, and just haven't been playing well as of late. Enter LeBron James. The Cavs superstar put the team on his back last night, leading a spirited 4th quarter charge that saw the good guys pull away.



It's been many years since a early December game against the Hawks could be considered vital, but that was the case last night in Atlanta for the Cavs.

Losers of three straight road games, playing down to the level of their competition all season, and also looking to avenge an early season home loss to Atlanta ... the Cavs came out inspired and enthused from the get go in this one last night. And then they rallied late behind LeBron James to walk away with a comfortable 106-95 win that moved the team to 10-6 on the season.

It was clear from the start that this was not the same Cavs team that seemed to sleepwalk through losses to the Raptors, Pacers, and Knicks over the last week. The team look prepared and sharp from the opening tip, and played with an attitude and swagger that we've only seen in games against the leagues elite this season. The game was played at a breakneck pace early, with the Cavs controlling the tempo and the scoreboard throughout the entire first half.

The Hawks came out of the half inspired, and played tough defense in the third quarter, rallying to tie the game at 79-79 through three quarters. And that's where the Cavs and LeBron James took over. LeBron scored 13 points in the final frame, and the Cavaliers outscored the Hawks 27-16 in the fourth quarter to put the giftwrapping on just the teams third road win of the season. James finished with 31 points, 8 rebounds, and 7 assists ... and consistently attacked the basket all night, something we haven't seen as often as we did last season.

The Cavs shot 53% from the floor, consistently creating good looks for themselves on this night. And when they did miss, they often were able to get the carom, corraling 13 offensive rebounds and enjoying an overall 42-32 advantage on the glass over the Hawks. Damon Jones had another good game, scoring 15 points on 6-8 from the field and 3-4 from three point range. And Eric Snow continued his solid play as of late, contributing 13 points, 8 assists, and 3

rebounds. Rookie Shannon Brown got another start at shooting guard, but played only 12 minutes. Fellow rookie Danoel Gibson played 17 minutes of scrappy defense and did not commit a turnover.

The Cav killer tandem of Joe Johnson and Tyronne Lue was at it again last night for Atlanta. Johnson had 31 points on 12-23 shooting from the field, and Lue once again scorched the Cavs for 17 points and 5 assists. The Hawks young center Zaza Pachulia was also impressive, scoring 20 points and notching 11 rebounds.

Now at 10-6, the win leaves the Cavs one game behind the 11-5 Pistons in the NBA's Central division. The team boarded a plane last night for a trip to Houston, as they will take on the Rockets this evening in the second game of a back to back. The Cavs then have three days off before coming back home to host Toronto in another payback game on Wednesday.