

10 Things "I Think" About The Cleveland Cavaliers

Written by {ga=noahpoinar}

Saturday, February 09 2013 12:00 AM - Last Updated Saturday, February 09 2013 7:11 PM



When your stuck rooting for a terrible team in the NBA, your inclination is to ignore them, berate them, and for the greater good of the lottery, discretely root against them. This was the road Cavs fans were traveling down up until the team acquired the services of Marreese Speights, Wayne Ellington and Shaun Livingston. Suddenly, things look a lot different at the Q. The Cavs have become watchable, likable, even fun. They just beat Thunder. Fans have become less fixated on the lottery, more comfortable with the teams long-term direction, congratulatory of Chris Grant, and all in all, more invested in everything Cavs. The Cleveland Cavaliers finally have a NBA roster, and it's something worth getting excited about. So if you haven't already, go ahead and get excited ... and do it quick, before they trade Speights!

Here are ten things I think about the new-look Cavs.

I think Kyrie Irving is the most valuable player in the league (Warning: extreme bias)

If nothing else, forego reading the rest of this story and just watch these two videos.

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But back to Irving. No, this doesn't mean I think he's the MVP, or that he's better than LeBron, Durant, and others. It just means that when you break down the actual meaning of "value," Irving has the most. It's fairly plain and simple; he's 20 and already one of the league's ten best players, top five natural scorers, and has yet to reach his ceiling because, again, he's only 20. He's also only making \$5.4 million this year, which puts him in a class all alone. Who knows when he'll reach his ceiling, or how high that ceiling will be. We might still be in store for three more years of steadfast improvement. He might shoot 60% in a season. He might average 35.0. He might have a 70 point game. He might block someone's shot with his head. He might become the greatest scoring point guard of all time. He might win a NBA Defensive Player of the Year. Point being, we don't know, and the mystique of "not knowing" is ultimately why we watch, follow, and pour our lives into this thing called sports. The idea of "what might be" will always trump the finality of "what is." Sorry, it just will ... and that's why Kyrie Irving is so valuable.

If Kevin Durant is the "cheat mode" version of a modern forward, and LeBron James is the "cheat mode" version of a point forward, Irving is an early version of a "cheat mode" point guard. He's currently averaging 2 three-point makes per game while shooting .471 from the floor; according to the history of basketball (or ESPN's Brian McKitish) that's virtually unheard of ... especially for someone in their second season.

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I think there's an 85% chance LeBron James is a Cavalier once again.

Really, seriously, honestly, why would LeBron go to L.A? The only legitimate reason's you could give me are 1) to team up with Dwight Howard, and 2) Because it's L.A., and he's LeBron, and he's an attention whore. ☐☐

Think about it this way, if you could rob a bank and get away with it scott-free, would you do it? Morally speaking, I probably wouldn't. But LeBron's already robbed the proverbial bank, so he's out of options here. Now, it's just a matter of whether he'd like to get away with it. And that's mainly why so many Cavs fans are against it. I'm not about to tell you how you should feel, or what you should think, or why you should want the guy back, or why you should even welcome him back. I'm just going to tell you why you want to see this happen.

1. You're a human being, you like winning.
2. You're a Cleveland sports fan, you'd do anything to see a Championship in your lifetime.
3. You're a sports fan, you recognize that era's are better than championships themselves.
4. You're a Cavs fan, the thought of LeBron taking on the role of "Robin" to Kyrie's "Batman" makes you smile.

I think Stan Van Gundy becomes the coach of this team at some point in the next two years.

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If we had a metric for the number of wins a coach added or detracted from his teams overall win total, Byron Scott would be somewhere in the range of -7 wins. But that's just me throwing a number out. Because there isn't any such metric, I guess we have to rely on the next best thing ... Opponents Field Goal %. I've said it once and I'll say it again, defense is not a matter of effort, it's a matter of philosophy. The Cavs rank dead last in the league defensively, allowing opponents to shoot a horrific .475 from the field. They weren't much better last season (27th), or the season before (27th).

Even if I'm wrong about Byron Scott and it turns out that he isn't as terrible as I think, the Cavs could still do better way better. The fact of the matter is that there aren't lot of people who would turn down the opportunity to coach Kyrie Irving. For instance, like Stan.

But the troublesome issue with Byron Scott is that he and Kyrie Irving both love each other. Fire Scott and you run the risk of alienating Irving. Keep Scott and run the risk of not being as good of a team as they could be with someone like Stan.

I think Alonzo Gee might be the Cavs worst player

We always knew he wasn't a starter, that in a ideal world you'd want him coming off your bench, but now ... I'm not so sure. He looks awful, just terrible. It's disheartening.

I think the Cavs are a competent coach and small forward away from becoming an extremely good team.

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I do, I really do.

I think Tristan Thompson could (dare I say will) be a future all star.

Up until about a month ago, there were two groups of Tristan Thompson people. The one group screamed BUST!, and really, would have liked to see Dion Waiters bust if only for definitively proof that Chris Grant was a lousy talent evaluator. The other group basically said, "Chill out, he'll be fine, just give him time." What both parties could pretty much agree on, though, was that Thompson would always be more of a liability than a asset on the offensive end. If you were in the *patient, wait and see, he'll be fine group*, your hope was that he could develop into an afro-less reincarnation of Ben Wallace. Offensively, I thought Tristan was past the point of no return. A year ago today he was shooting 43 percent from the line and hadn't converted a field goal outside of five feet (ok, he had two FG's, but still). I had him pegged with the Shaq's and Howard's of the world—someone who was destined to be a career disaster from the stripe regardless of how much time they put in at practice.

So how did we go from there to here? I'm not exactly sure.

It's become impossible to throw Tristan Thompson into a fake trade on ESPN.com's NBA Trade Machine. Seriously, try it, your fingers won't let you.

In the last decade, the only player's to average 15 points, 12 boards and 50 percent FG% in a season: Kevin Garnett, Tim Duncan, Dwight Howard, Blake Griffin, and Zach Randolph. Over the last month, that's what Tristan Thompson is doing. His numbers aren't skewed by a couple of monster games, either. He's genuinely good for 15 points a night, which I never, ever would have imagined. An added bonus: he's already tripled his assist total from last year, something that shouldn't be ignored either.

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I think Dion Waiters is going to be great.

For starters, ESPN's David Thorpe has Waiters pegged as the "best scorer" and "most dynamic off the dribble" of any rookie this season, and that's surprising considering that Thorpe has been Waiters BIGGEST critic all season.

Waiters' problems aren't any secret. He's horrible when it comes to finishing and a extremely inefficient scorer. But when your talking about a player who is in his first season, those aren't exactly the worst problems to have. Waiters is basically a great power-hitter that doesn't take enough walks and hits for a low average. He may never be a consistently great shooter, and that's the most perplexing part of his game to project; however, when he learns to consistently finish at the rim (and he will), he'll be an elite player for years to come.

Reminder that he's only 20. He isn't anywhere now that he shouldn't be. Consider the case of Russell Westbrook and James Harden. The Thunder are viewed as the model of all model franchises' because they've, quote, "hit on all of their lottery picks." Not many people are aware, however, that in his first two seasons, Russell Westbrook averaged 15.3 and 16.1 points per game; James Harden averaged 9.9 and 12.2. Those are good numbers when you factor the typical production/minutes for players in their first couple years, but they aren't eye popping, nor do they necessarily scream Super Star in the making. Waiters is no different.

The truth is that we've been holding the Cavs youngsters to a incredibly high and misjudged standard. I suppose we can blame all of the losing for this—our heads are understandably in the gutter—but you also have to blame Kyrie Irving.

I think if I were Chris Grant I'd explore a way to acquire Paul Pierce this summer.

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Would this mean trading Varejao? Yes. Would it be worth it? Yes, but only if you get rid of Scott. Basically, you'd be getting Pierce on the last year of his remaining deal, so it wouldn't affect their cap in the long run. The Cavs would instantly become one of the top three teams in the East, and with Kyrie Irving who the hell knows what could happen in the playoffs. And lastly, you'd have Pierce as a backup plan in the event you don't come away with LeBron.

I think this is why I'm not Chris Grant.

Aside from passing on Andre Drummond, there isn't a lot you can complain about. The Cavs will send four players to compete in the Rookie/Sophomore game during all star weekend, and that's all you really need to know about where this team is and where they're going.

I think I like this random comment I saw on Cleveland.com via ORBuckeye.

"Who else on this board is old enough to remember when the Cavaliers drafted Hot Rod in '85, then Daugherty, then Harper, then made a draft day deal to get Price from Dallas in '86. then they drafted Kevin Johnson in 1987, and traded him to get Nance? I swear, the more I watch this current crop, the more I am being reminded of how that team, after about a year and a half together, went from young, not so good, to young, Magi's team of the 90's. That all happened within a 2 year window with that team. I'm not saying that Thompson is Daugherty or Nance, or that Waiters is Ron Harper. But, it is kinda crazy how a light switch has just kind of come on for this team. Do you see Tristan Thompson now? Running hook shots? Are you freaking kidding me? 70% on his free throws from 50%. Its been a while since I've seen someone go from looking totally clueless to almost All-Star like production in just 3 months. Remember the late 80's Cavaliers started out as a 31-51 team in 1986. They added Nance in '87, and went 42-40. It was the '88-'89 where they just blew up before our eyes. This team still needs a couple of pieces, but they are attainable because of the way they have acquired picks and cap space. Enjoy this ride, because I can see really good things coming."