



The talk on social media on Tuesday was that this would be forever remembered as "the Luke Walton Game." On the surface, Luke Walton's 8 points, 5 rebounds, 5 assists and a steal are not that impressive. Of every player in the match-up between the Chicago Bulls and Cleveland Cavaliers, he had the highest +/- with a +13. The reason Walton had great success despite not having a great box score was his veteran presence. The ball seemed to move better when he was in the game. He took good shots. His defense was smart. Last but not least, he played with great effort. This was most evident when he chased down a loose ball after two made Cavalier free throws that practically won the game and knocked it off Kirk Hinrich's leg.

The win against the Bulls was significant for the young Cavs. They were without superstar Kyrie Irving due to a hyper-extended knee. Going into the game, the Bulls have won 11 straight against the Cavs. In fact, you would have to go back to the LeBron James era to find the last time that the Cavs beat the Bulls in the regular season. To win a game against a team that has 11 straight wins against you is impressive. To do it on the road is even more impressive. To do it without your best player is incredible.

The Cavs got off to a slow start and had to overcome a large deficit. After a little over four minutes, the Cavs found themselves trailing by a score of 11-2 after shooting 12.5%. Tristan Thompson did his best to keep the Cavs in the game. Thompson had 9 points and 3 rebounds

in the first quarter. He played a little too aggressively at times during the quarter, but his energy appeared to be infectious on the rest of the team. By the time the first quarter was over, the Cavs only trailed by a score of 22-19. This was quite promising considering the slow start that the team had.

After being benched quickly in the first twelve minutes, Dion Waiters played the entire second quarter. He had an effective stretch. Waiters finished the quarter with 10 points on 7 shots. Waiters has looked great as of late. Against the Bulls, he had 25 points on 10-16 shooting. Leading up to the game on Tuesday, Waiters has been shooting 14.1 points on 50.9% shooting. A lot of people, including myself, were critical of Cavaliers general manager Chris Grant for selecting an out of shape guard who did not work out for the team or start in college with the fourth overall pick. The recent play of Dion Waiters has shown that we should be patient before casting final judgements on young players. In two weak drafts, Chris Grant has managed to get a superstar and two players who look like legitimate rotation players on good teams.

The Cavs only had 7 assists on 20 made field goals after the first half. They improved on their ball movement in the second half and finished the game with a respectable 18 assists.

When it was announced that this game would be on NBA TV, the general consensus was that it was exciting for fans nationally to see Kyrie Irving. When news of his hyper-extended knee surfaced earlier in the day on Tuesday, fans appeared to have soured on the prospect of the game being on nationally. Despite the lack of Kyrie Irving and Derrick Rose, the game was quite entertaining. There were 19 lead changes and 7 ties in the course of the game. Most interesting was that the largest lead for the Bulls and Cavs was 9 for both teams. In other words, both teams made runs and got themselves out of a somewhat large deficit.

On the Bulls side of things, Carlos Boozer continues to be a pain for the Cavaliers. The veteran power forward was not afraid to shoot. He was the high point man in the game with 27 points. Luol Deng was solid. He had 26 points in nearly 40 minutes of play. What is interesting is that the Bulls had the top 2 scorers in the game and they did not come away with the win. The shorthanded Cavs bench was too much for Chicago. The Cavs bench outscored the Bulls bench by a score of 36-19.

This was a good team win. Shaun Livingston made his first start with the Cavs and contributed. Wayne Ellington made timely shots. Dion Waiters was efficient and showed a wide array of moves. Tristan Thompson helped set the tone early.

The Cavs had a successful three game road trip. They finished it with 2 wins. The lone loss can be categorized as a "moral victory" because of how they came from behind against the Miami Heat on Sunday and nearly won. The Cavs take on the Toronto Raptors on Wednesday night. Tip-off is at 7:00 PM.