



To say that the Cavs started the game against the Raptors on Tuesday night poorly would be the understatement of the year. The Cavs missed 14 out of their first 15 shots in the game and were giving up open shots to the Raptors. Cleveland was trailing the Raptors 21-7 with 3:07 remaining in the first quarter. Despite shooting 24% in the first quarter, the Cavs only trailed 20-25 after the first 12 minutes of the game.

The scripts on Cavs games lately is that they come out of the gate passively despite Tristan Thompson playing hard. Once again, he played like a bull in a china shop in the first stretch of the game. Perhaps he wanted to send a message to the many detractors who believed the Cavs should have drafted Jonas Valanciunas. Thompson secured 8 rebounds in the game and 5 of them were in the first quarter. Thompson missed all of his 5 shots in the first, but it once again felt like he helped set the tone. Even on nights when his shot isn't falling, It feels like he is making more of an impact lately than he did earlier in his career.

Shaun Livingston made his second straight start for the injured Kyrie Irving. Despite his foul trouble, Livingston was able to play 33 minutes. In addition, it did not appear that he allowed his 5 fouls to heavily affect his defensive intensity. Livingston had 15 points, 5 rebounds and 6 assists. One of the most entertaining moments of the game came with 54 seconds left in the game. Only leading by 5 points after giving up a 9 point lead earlier in the quarter, it felt like the game could go either way. Rudy Gay and DeMar DeRozan were hitting seemingly every shot that they took. Livingston had a great no-look pass to Alonzo Gee who lost his man on a screen. Gee had a reverse dunk which helped shift momentum.

Once again, Luke Walton was exceptional. Although he only scored 5 points, he also had 7 rebounds and 7 assists. Walton led the Cavs in +/- with a positive rating of 20. The offense seems to flow much better when he is in the game and a part of the offense. Walton had a great no-look bounce-pass through his own legs to Wayne Ellington who converted on an 18 foot jump shot with 32 seconds left in the game. It happened on the very next possession after the great Shaun Livingston pass to Alonzo Gee. Needless to say, it was the most entertaining sequence in the game and it left the crowd at the Quicken Loans Arena overjoyed.

The Cavs bench was fantastic yet again. They outscored the Raptors reserves 39-8. In fact, the Raptors bench did not score a single point in the second half of the game. Andrea Bargnani came off the bench and had a very uninspired 15 minutes of play. He took 4 shots and missed them all. Bargnani did not get to the free throw line once. He did only secured one rebound and was of little help on the defensive end. As Cavaliers fans, we should feel fortunate that the team won the lottery in 2011. Despite it being labelled a "weak draft" by experts, the team managed to find a franchise player. The Raptors simply cannot be happy with the direction that Bargnani's career has gone in since drafting him first overall in 2006.

Dion Waiters is continuing his solid play in the month of February. Waiters shot 7-16 en route to a 23 point and 6 assist performance. He has been spectacular lately. It will be interesting to see if he can continue playing this well once Kyrie Irving hopefully returns. As Mary Schmitt Boyer of the Cleveland Plain Dealer pointed out on [Twitter](#), Waiters was given the rotation minutes of Kyrie Irving in the 4th quarter. What is encouraging is that Waiters has been playing well for much longer than Irving has been injured, but it is a situation worth keeping an eye on.

The Cavs wrapped up a four games in five nights situation on a strong note. They went 3-1 during that stretch despite three of the games being on the road. They get the next few days off and take on Chris Paul, Blake Griffin and the Los Angeles Clippers at the Quicken Loans Arena on Friday night. Tip-off is at 7:30 PM.