

## A Breakdown of the Cleveland Cavaliers

Written by {ga=noahpoinar}

Thursday, March 07 2013 9:00 PM - Last Updated Friday, March 08 2013 7:01 PM

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When Danny Ferry resigned back in 2010, Chris Grant was simply the next guy in line for promotion. At least to Cavs fans he was; frankly, either way, we were too depressed to give-a-crap. At that point nothing mattered, we were all self acclaimed NBA GM's, all you had to do was find a way to fleece one of the league's eight superstars.

As it turned out, the Cavs promoted an extremely intelligent and innovative executive, and this was a god-send because the league was on the brink of transmogrification. With the advent of the new Collective Bargaining Agreement, suddenly front offices matter more than ever. The onus has been placed on their god-given intelligence, and (more importantly) their ability to exercise self control. Chris Grant and the Cavs have been ahead of the ball game from the start, to the point that I completely trust the Cavs and their front office — and that's hard for a sports blogger to say. But I do, I trust them. I trust they will make a significant deal this summer ... but only if they feel it's the right one for them. And I'm reasonably confident that they know (better than you or I do) what's best for this team. Not only do they possess a higher degree of general basketball/business knowledge, but [thanks to SportsVU](#) , a high tech camera tracking system installed in Quicken Loans Arena, the Cavs have access to an overwhelming amount of knowledge. Knowledge that we (the fans) will never lay our eyes on until a disgruntled team employee decides they want to leak it on the internet. The Cavs also have an owner who is both visible and accountable, someone who has proven he will spend the necessary dollars (and then some) to field a winning team. Which begs the question ...

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**With half of the league frantically scrambling to get under the new (and much harsher) luxury tax, how far would Dan Gilbert be willing to reach into his pockets (if need be) to pay this new tax?**

A couple years from now, the Cavs may very well find themselves in the same exact situation the Thunder were in with James Harden. In 2014-2015, the Cavs will extend Kyrie Irving, giving him a league maximum deal. At the same time, provided they haven't traded him, they'll be inking Tristan Thompson to a new deal — my guess would be something in the \$8-10 million per year range. If the Cavs already have someone else locked into a max money — and many people think this person could be LeBron — Dion Waiters will financially be the odd man out. This, of course, is assuming Waiters is good enough to be considered a max money-type player. Actually, this is assuming a lot of things.

Nevertheless, here are three silver linings to consider:

**One:** ☐ If the Cavs ever face this financial fork in the road, there's no telling what they could get in return for someone like Waiters. I can already name 10 teams who would jump at the opportunity to slide him in as their starting point guard. In fact, I'm pretty sure the Pacers are putting together a trade package as we speak. ☐☐

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**Two:** For all the crap we give Tyler Zeller — about his weight, ethnicity, inability to add muscle, and the fact that he has zero physical presence down low — it's probably a good thing that Zeller's ceiling is considerably lower than the rest of the current rookie/sophomore bunch. Down the line, he's not likely to command big money. The Cavs shouldn't have a problem fitting him in.

And that's the downfall (and really the only downfall) of owning this many draft picks in such a short span of time.

**Three:** Despite everything I just wrote, the NBA's current CBA expires in 2016, and we will likely have another lockout. When it gets resolved there is a good chance the league walks away with a new deal entirely different from what we have now, and then we get to have this discussion all over again.

But enough about 2016 ... how about 2013?

**Statistically speaking, how is it the Cavs are playing so well? Explain**

It's their turnovers. Here's a month-by-month breakdown of it.

November: 16.1 (25th)

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December: 14.4 (16th)

January: 13.0 (4th)

February: 11.7 (1st)

**Here's to hoping the Cavs keep Mo Speights, Wayne Ellington, and Shaun Livingston.**

We feel like the Cavs blew it by not dealing Varejao before his annual season-ending injury. But what a lot people fail to realize is that the Cavs front office delivered. They gave us what we wanted (draft picks) and they didn't even have to trade Varejao. The Cavs acquired a total of four first round picks this season. Yes, four. Were you aware? Allow me to refresh ...

1. A future first rounder from the Grizzlies, the one Memphis was willing to part with in the Speights/Ellington deal.
2. Shaun Livingston, the 4th overall pick in the 2004 draft.
3. Wayne Ellington, the 28th selection in the 2009 draft.

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4. And Marreese Speights, the 16th overall pick in the 2008 draft.

So yea, we got the draft picks we wanted. Sort of. We can at least agree that the Cavs made up for the picks they previously blew or gave away.

2004: Luke Jackson -- 10th overall.

2008: J.J. Hickson -- 19th overall.

2009: Christian Eyenga (30th) and Danny Green (46th)

Just for the sheer purpose of blowing your mind, here are some of the player's that were taken after Mo Speights in the 2008 draft; which, by the way, wasn't that long ago.

Roy Hibbert (no. 17)

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JaVale McGee (no. 18)

Ryan Anderson (no. 21)

Kosta Koufos (no. 23)

Serge Ibaka (no. 24)

Nic Batum (no. 25)

Nikola Pekovic (no. 31)

DeAndre Jordan (no. 35)

Omer Asik (no. 36).

Good gawd, talk about a draft that was loaded with bigs ... and I didn't even include Brook Lopez (10th) and Kevin Love (5th).

Mo Speights may look like he's pushing 30, but believe it or not he's only 25. In the sports world, that means he's worth keeping around; [Ellington](#) and Livingston as well. From the free-throw line, they are as close to automatic as they come. They have yet to miss a free-throw in crunch-time this season. I find myself liking Ellington more and more with each passing game. He's got that for knack for hitting a much needed three-pointer, the kind that

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brings a team back into the game when they're down 10 and things look like they are slipping away. And I feel like he's brought out the best out in CJ Miles. As for Livingston, he revived Luke Walton's pro basketball career; Luke Walton has seemingly revived Livingston's career as well. Austin Carr is in agreement. If this team goes into next season with the roster exactly the way it is now, they'll be a .500 team, at worst. That's before you take into account the natural improvement the Cavs "big four" will make.

### **Here's to hoping Chris Paul screws over the Clippers. ☐**

He's an unrestricted free agent this summer. If this were to happen, every player on the Clippers roster would suddenly become fair game in a trade. It was actually reported that the Cavs were in serious talks with the Clippers about a Varejao swap for Eric Bledsoe and DeAndre Jordan. The Clippers reportedly backed away, but it's something to at least keep in mind.

### **Here's to hoping the Cavs can get their hands on Kentucky's Nerlens Noel.☐☐**

Despite the gaping hole the Cavs have at Small Forward, taking a center like Noel would make the most sense. For a multitude of reasons he's a perfect fit for the Cavs, but here's one reason in particular:

As I somewhat touched on earlier, the Cavs, along with 14 other NBA teams, recently installed high tech cameras in their arena to record every little thing that happens in a game, allowing teams to gain a wider array of information and stats. Kirk Goldsberry, a really smart guy by all accounts, conducted research for the NBA's 2013 Sloan Conference and wrote a paper titled "[The Dwight Effect.](#)"

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It details NBA interior defensemen (PF, C), and the percentage of plays in which opposing teams attack them for a shot attempt. It found that teams attack Dwight Howard the least of any interior defender in the league — hence, the Dwight effect.



But Goldsberry's paper went further than that, ultimately unveiling a new stat, "Proximal Field Goal Percentage." Basically, "Proximate Field Goal Percentage" measures the opponents FG% when (said defender) is within 5 feet of defending the shot attempt. It has revealed that the most effective proximate defender in the league is Larry Sanders; opponents have shot only 34.9% when he is within 5 feet of their shot. Conversely, despite the amount of national attention David Lee's (53.0%) atrocious defense has received, it is Anderson Varejao, allowing a FG% of 54.2%, who ranks dead last in the entire National Basketball Association in this category. In other words, we've vastly overrated Varejao's value on the defensive end.

It's clear the Cavs defense has been problematic for quite some time. With his absurd length and shot blocking prowess, Nerlens Noel and the Cavs would be an ideal fit. Actually, they'd be a terrific fit.

However, this doesn't mean I'm hoping the Cavs bottom out to acquire him. Instead ...

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### **Here's to hoping the Portland Trail Blazers finish just outside the playoffs. ☐**

Charlotte, who will be favored to win the lottery, owns Portland's first round pick; however, the pick is top 12 protected. But if the season ended today, Portland's pick would fall outside of the top 12 and go to Charlotte. Thus, if the Bobcats end up with a top four selection, which is all but assured, they could provide a realistic opportunity for the Cavs to move up. It's probably in the Cavs best interest to package their picks anyway, and there's a good chance they will try to.

### **Here's to saying "screw it" to tanking. ☐**

I'm rooting for the Cavs to win as many games possible this year. It's costing them valuable draft position, sure. But the value of winning is extremely important, both for the sake of our sanity and the confidence of the players. That's what we often forget. At the end of the day, what the Cavs have done is they've kept everyone "cool." That's what winning accomplishes, cooler heads. Jules summed it up best in *Pulp Fiction*, "When you yell at me, it makes me nervous. And when I get nervous, I get scared. And when motherfu\*\*ers get scared, that's when motherfu\*\*ers accidentally get shot!" But the Cavs are winning, so we're cool now. We're not panicky, we're not scared, no one's calling for heads, no one's getting fired. The front office, the fans, the players ... we're all cool.