



The Cleveland Cavaliers announced on Monday that point guard Kyrie Irving will be shut down for three to four weeks with an AC sprain in his shoulder.

Are there any Cavs fans who are surprised?

Irving was injured Sunday night when he ran into Toronto's Jonas Valanciunas. After making one of the two ensuing free throws, he left the game for good.

After playing just 11 games at Duke, Irving missed 15 games last season, has already [missed 14 games this season](#)

, and [broke his hand over the summer](#) after slamming it into a wall during practice.

In the short run, the Cavs plans for Irving should be pretty easy - with only five weeks left in the season, they should shut him down for the rest of the year. With the Cavs looking to maximize their draft position rather than battling for a playoff spot, there is little reason to bring Irving back this season just so he can play for a week.

Shaun Livingston will take over Irving's starting spot, with Dion Waiters and Boobie Gibson

filling in as back-up point guards.

"It's not going to be one guy that can take over all the things that Kyrie brings to the table, so we'll have to do it by committee," [Cavs coach Byron Scott told *The Plain Dealer*](#) . "It's as simple as that. The core of our rotation is Shaun and Dion and Boobie, so we'll see how it works."

It's easy enough for Scott to make plans for the next few weeks; it is the long-run plan that may be a bit trickier.

The Cavs have been playing it smart ever since losing LeBron James in free agency. Rather than dropping a lot of money in free agency in the hopes that they could rise up to the seventh or eighth seed in the Eastern Conference (and the requisite first-round playoff loss that goes along with that), the team has been collecting assets and slowly rebuilding the team around a young core of high draft picks.

But now, with Irving injured again, fans have to wonder if the Cavs can afford to stick to the slow and steady model of building the team. This latest injury has to have general manager Chris Grant wondering if he can accelerate the rebuilding in some way, because any success the Cavs hope to have in the future revolves around Irving.

Irving is averaging 23 points, 5.7 assists, 3.7 rebounds and 1.6 steals in 35.1 minutes per game this season, and leads the Cavs in just about every statistical category. The Cavs are also just 8-21 in games that Irving has missed in two seasons. So his importance to the team can't be understated.

But if he continues to get hurt, will he still be the franchise player when the Cavs finally need him?

Consider that, in less than two years in the league, Irving has had a concussion, fractured his wrist, hurt both his shoulders, broke a bone in his jaw, hyperextended his knee and fractured a finger. (Did we miss anything?)

While none of the injuries have been "major," and Irving's always been able to come back, eventually all those aches and pains, added to the normal bumps and bruises associated with playing in the NBA, are going to start adding up for Irving.

"He's still very young. His body hasn't fully developed," [Scott told *The Beacon Journal*](#) . "I'm just not that concerned about it. All the injuries that he's gotten have been legitimate injuries. It's not something that keeps recurring over and over. From what I saw last night with the hip check, it was just an unfortunate foul that hit him right on the spot. I'm not concerned about it right now."

It's nice that Scott is not concerned. We're just not sure we can say the same about Cavs fans.

(Photo by The Associated Press)