

Rocked: Cavs Lost Big in Houston

Written by {ga=hermanfontenot}

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You can file under the heading “inevitable” Cleveland’s 116-78 loss to the Rockets on Friday night. Injury-depleted and coming off their stunning, emotional loss to



Miami on Wednesday, the Cavaliers were doomed before they stepped onto the floor at the Toyota Center against the now-38-31 Rockets, who are on their way to securing a berth in the Western Conference Playoffs.

The Cavaliers started off well enough, knocking in their first three shot attempts and moving out to a 23-20 lead late in the first quarter. But an 8-2 run gave Houston the lead for good at the end of one, and from there the Rockets blew it open. With Cleveland making just two field goals in the first eight-and-a-half minutes of the second quarter, Houston rolled to a 58-43 halftime lead.

The second half was simply a death march. The Cavaliers clanged away at a 30.6 percent clip in the final two periods; Houston shot a healthy 54 percent. The result was Cleveland getting outscored 58-33. When Greg Smith’s layup put the Rockets up by 20 late in the third period the rout was on in earnest.

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The box score tells the gruesome story. Cleveland shot 36 percent on the night, with the leading scorer (Shaun Livingston) finishing with just 14 points. Thanks mainly to all those missed shots the Cavaliers were also walloped on the boards, 54-32. Houston shot 57.1 percent and put seven players in double figures, led by James Harden's 20.

By the way, how about Daniel Gibson's line: 0-of-9 from the field (0-of-6 from downtown) with 0 points and 0 assists. Combined with his terrible performance against the Heat, it's become clear that the Boobie Era in Cleveland is just about at its end. I don't know if his limited athleticism has caught up with him or if he has simply checked out, but Boobie is done here. We've come a long way from Game Six in 2007.

Oh well, to hell with it. With Kyrie and Dion in dry dock, and after what happened last Wednesday night, might as well lose the rest of them.

Race for the Ping Pong Balls: Here are the bottom of the NBA standings at the close of Friday night's action:

Charlotte (16-52: --)

Orlando (18-52: 1)

Cleveland (22-47: 5.5)

Detroit (23-48: 5.5)

Phoenix (23-47: 6)

New Orleans (24-46: 7)

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Minnesota (24-43: 8.5)

Sacramento (25-44: 8.5)

Washington (25-43: 9)

Toronto (26-43: 9.5)

Philadelphia (26-42: 10)

The way things seem to be going the third slot in the Draft Lottery will come down to the Cavaliers, Pistons and Suns. Both of those teams are setting a mean pace. Detroit lost its tenth straight in Miami on Friday, while Phoenix has lost eight of ten and was walloped at home by the lowly Timberwolves on Friday.

With the Pistons and Suns energetically mailing it in (if that even makes sense) the Cavaliers are just going to have to keep losing. Somehow I doubt that's going to be a problem.

Next: Wednesday night at 7:00, when the Cavaliers welcome the slumping Boston Celtics to the Q.