



One of the teams was destined to end a five game losing streak in the match-up between the Cleveland Cavaliers and Boston Celtics on Wednesday night. Both teams were ravaged by injuries. The Celtics were without Rajon Rondo, Kevin Garnett, Courtney Lee and Jared Sullinger. The Celtics also had the misfortune of playing on the second night of a back-to-back on the road. The Cavaliers had to give it a go without Kyrie Irving, Dion Waiters and Anderson Varejao. The Cavs did not make the most of playing at home and not having played a game since they were in Houston on Friday.

Other than Jeff Green's buzzer-beating layup to end the game with the Celtics up 93-92, the obvious factor for the loss was the discrepancy in free throws. Boston attempted 28 free throws in comparison to 14 for Cleveland. In addition to not getting many free throw attempts, the Cavs failed to materialize when they actually did. The Cavs made 9 free throws, which was good for a lackluster 64.3%. Had the Cavs made 2 more free throws, they would have probably won the game.

With the Celtics not having Kevin Garnett and Jared Sullinger available, it was important that the Cavaliers big men came ready to play. Tyler Zeller came out strong scoring 7 points and securing 6 rebounds in the first quarter of play. Zeller scored in a wide-array of ways. He did so

from mid-range jump shots and even put the ball on the floor and dunked. Even though Zeller finished with 11 points and 9 rebounds, it is difficult to not be disappointed that he did not have a strong second half. When a player comes out of the gate so well, it is expected that he will do better than score 2 points and grab 1 rebound in the second half of the game.

Tristan Thompson had a suspect game. The second year power forward missed all but one shot on his way to a 2 point and 9 rebound performance. Despite his offensive struggles, he had the highest +/- for the Cavs with a +7 in the game.

Paul Pierce was fantastic for the Celtics. He started off fairly slowly, but got better as the game progressed. Pierce finished the night with 19 points, 10 rebounds and 8 assists. The only blemish on the box score was his 7 turnovers. What was interesting about the final possession in the game is that most people probably assumed that it would be Pierce who took the final shot. Pierce may have been used as a decoy for the Celtics who relied on Jeff Green to take and convert on a game-winning layup.

The Cavs gave up another late lead in the loss. The Celtics trailed the Cavs by a score of 72-86 with about 8 minutes left in the game. At this point, Doc Rivers substituted Avery Bradley, Brandon Bass and Paul Pierce. With the combination of Pierce's offense and Bradley's intense perimeter defense, the Cavs stood little chance. With the Cavs' questionable talent level and depleted roster, they have very little margin of error in these games. Cleveland gave up a 21-6 run to end the game, which is not the type of basketball that the Cavs can afford to play if they want to beat a playoff team like the Celtics.

The Cavaliers play the Philadelphia 76ers on Friday night. This is a game that Cleveland should have a chance of winning, but that is not likely with three of the best player on the roster being injured. Tipoff is at 7:30.