



At the end of the strike-shortened, 66-game 2011-2012 NBA season, the Cavs had won 21 games. That's approximately equivalent to 26 victories over a regular, 82-game season.

To date, the Cavs have a 22-51 record through their first 73 games; the way they've been playing, another victory doesn't seem to be coming anytime soon.

Even if they were to go 5-4 over their final nine games, they would finish at 27-55, one game better than last year's pace.

Raise your hand if you believe this will happen.

Undoubtedly, you did not raise your hand, and instead clicked on the read more option to find out why exactly the Cavs have failed to take a step forward this season.

This season, the Cavs have Kyrie Irving and Tristan Thompson, both with a year's worth of experience, to go along with the dynamic scoring rookie Dion Waiters and much improved bench depth.

Now, at this time the injury bug has bitten the team badly. Both Irving and Waiters have been unable to play for weeks, although even Kyrie's brief return and 31 points against the Hornets failed to result in anything more than a 20 point loss to another NBA cellar dweller. And this doesn't even take into account the loss of Anderson Varejao for most of the season.

It would be easy enough for the Cavs to blame these injuries for their losses, and get through the end of the season with thoughts of competing next year. But the way they have been losing will not allow that. Starting with the heart-breaking, stereotypical Cleveland loss to the Heat on March 20<sup>th</sup>, the Cavs have lost every game in a similar style. They compete at the beginning, maybe even have a lead at the half or into the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter, but then proceed to choke it all away.

But the fact that they're even competing with the likes of Shaun Livingston and Wayne Ellington in their starting lineup makes it okay, right? No. Any team with a 27 point lead late in the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter should go on to win that game. Period. It doesn't matter who Team A is or who Team B is. That needs to be a victory.

So aside from injuries, what is the problem? Clearly, it's Byron Scott.

Scott came to this team just before the Decision in the summer of 2010. And let's be honest, Scott wasn't hired because he was the perfect coach to rebuild Cavs roster and make them a playoff team once again. He was hired because the higher ups felt he was a coach who LeBron would respect and want to play for.

But then LeBron left, and the PR people turned him into the coach who would bring this team back to the playoffs. That's not what he is. If the Cavs had been sure of LeBron's intentions to leave, they would have hired somebody different.

Coach Scott has lost this young team. It's evident by the way they have been playing this last month, and by comments that have been made anonymously to the media.

One unidentified player believes Scott works them far too hard, while another insists that the first should just "shut up and play."

Either way, if Scott were the coach that this team needs to captain the ship through this rebuild, players would not be rising in mutiny. If Scott were the right coach for this team, he would have control of the locker room.

Players are questioning his play calling and in game strategy. He left them out to dry twice, by not calling timeouts while Miami and Boston went on huge runs in consecutive home games, and both times the Cavs lost.

His best healthy player right now is Tristan Thompson, and, according to Jason Lloyd, one player questioned why Thompson is not involved in the offense whatsoever.



"He's doing a great job with that push shot he's developed," said one Cavs player, who spoke under the condition of anonymity, to Lloyd. "And no one will run a play for him."

I'm not an NBA coach. I'm not going to pretend to know more about the game than Byron Scott. But I am able to tell when a coach has lost control of his team, and Coach Scott has done just that.

This should have been the year the Cavs took another step forward. Their win total should have jumped, not stayed the same. And as mentioned, this year's will be even lower when the last year's shortened season is considered.

The ending of this season has been filled with immense disappointment. It reeks of the same stench that Manny Acta's final two months in Cleveland smelled of. Scott may be allowed one more season, but unless the Cavs take a huge step forward and are at least in the rear view mirror of the team in the 8<sup>th</sup> and final playoff seed, Scott will have failed as a coach. His time here is running out. Unless he turns things around quickly, he will not be roaming the sidelines in one year's time.

This is a team with a premier player in Kyrie Irving, and solid supporting, starting caliber players in Dion Waiters and Tristan Thompson, and a quality bench which GM Chris Grant should try his best to keep intact for next season. It's time they find the coach who can take them to the next level.