

## The Roundtable: Could Brown Be Hot Seat Bound?

Written by {ga=consigliere}

Saturday, April 21 2007 7:00 PM -

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The 2007 playoffs have begun for the Cavaliers. The Cavaliers got a huge break this past Wednesday when the Bulls lost, and the good fortune meant that the Cavaliers ended up with the #2 seed and as much of a cakewalk as any #2 seed in some years has seen to get to the Conference Finals. But, if the Cavaliers fail to meet those expectations, could coach Mike Brown find himself on the hot seat? TheClevelandFan.com writers opine...



*&quot;The Roundtable&quot; is a regular weekly Sunday feature that will continue throughout the year covering hot topics surrounding the Browns, Buckeyes, Cavaliers, and Indians. One question. Several different answers from TheClevelandFan.com panel.*

The Cavaliers caught a huge break this past Wednesday night when the Cavaliers won their game at home against the Milwaukee Bucks, and the Bulls lost on the road at New Jersey. The good fortune meant that the Cavaliers ended up with the #2 seed and as much of a cakewalk as any #2 seed in some years has seen to the Conference Finals.

With the #2 seed in hand, the Cavaliers avoid playing the East's other three big dogs the Miami Heat, Chicago Bulls, and Detroit Pistons until the Conference Finals, and most importantly only have to at most play ONE of them.

This was a great draw for the Cavaliers, which may be one of the best draws in recent memory for a #2 seed to get to the Conference Finals. But, what if the unthinkable happens and the Cavaliers lose in the first round to the Washington Wizards or in the second round to the winner of the New Jersey Nets/Toronto Raptors series? There would seem to be some fallout as a result, of which always comes back to the people at the top: the general manager and head coach.

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Cavaliers General Manager Danny Ferry is not going anywhere anytime soon, but could Mike Brown be on the hot seat with a poor playoff showing? TheClevelandFan.com writers opine....

**[John Hnat](#)**: □ With a first-round series against a Washington team that has been strip-mined by injury, and a projected second-round pairing against either Toronto or New Jersey (neither of whom should be taken for granted, but both of whom should be beatable), the Cavs have as clear a path to the Eastern Conference Finals as you'll ever see. If they do not make it to the conference finals, then the season will not be a step forward, and really would represent a step or two back.

That does not necessarily mean that coach Mike Brown will feel any heat. He's done well enough in his two years as coach to retain his Golden Boy Assistant halo. Plus, he was the hand-picked choice of not only GM Danny Ferry, but also owner Dan Gilbert. I seriously doubt that Brown's job will be in any jeopardy unless and until he shows some level of Not Getting It... and with the strides he has helped this team to make on defense, I would guess that he would need an entire season of regression before we'd see a change on the bench.

Then again, if the Wizards sweep the Cavs in four straight (relax; I'm not saying it will happen, or that it has any appreciable chance of happening), all bets are off.

**[Erik Cassano](#)**: □ Now that the Cavaliers have clinched the second seed, I think the pressure definitely gets ratcheted up on Mike Brown, though regardless of what happens between now and June, I still expect him to be the Cavs' coach when they open training camp in October.

This is the situation the Cavs wanted to be in, facing a depleted Wizards club in the first round and not having to worry about Detroit, Miami or Chicago until the conference finals. They have to capitalize on it.

I think most people will agree that anything short of a conference finals berth would now constitute a disappointing playoff run.

Not only that, if the Cavs look shaky against Washington or the winner of the Toronto-New Jersey series, if the outcomes of those series are ever in doubt, Brown will feel the heat.

With the second seed comes the expectation that you are going to go deep into the playoffs, and in the Cavs' situation, that you won't encounter significant resistance until the conference finals. But you have to make it so by playing focused basketball from here on out. If the Cavs have had an Achilles' heel this season, it's been between the ears. Rightly or wrongly, the blame finds its way back to Brown.

**[Todd Dery](#)**: □ We all know that Mike Brown does not run the Cavaliers; LeBron James does. The answer to this question was made ever more clear when the Bulls lost to the Nets Wednesday night, vaulting the Cavaliers to the #2 seed in the East. An early exit for the Cavs and Mike Brown is a goner.

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Look at the draw. First round you have a date with the injury-ravaged Washington Wizards. Honestly, anything less than a 4-1 Cavs series win would be constituted as a disappointment. They won't be seeing the Bulls, Heat, or Pistons in the conference semis, rather they will see the winner of Toronto and New Jersey. With all of the negativity surrounding Brown's coaching abilities, he has his team in a cake-walk position to get to the Eastern Conference Finals.

While nobody will say it within the organization, Mike Brown is not the coach of the future here. The way LeBron and Larry Hughes have openly questioned the offensive scheme most of the year is telling. The inmates are running the asylum. Brown may have the last laugh though. Had the Cavs ended up in the #5 spot and lost to the Heat in the first round, he would assuredly be fired. But luck is on his side with this draw. With all that said, he'd better not lose anytime before the Eastern Finals.

**Hiko:** Well, I had a completely different answer for this question when I thought the Cavs would be facing off against Miami in the first round.

Now, this is easy: **Hell yeah he'd be on the Hot Seat!** And rightfully so. You just don't lose in the first round to a Washington team that is without Gilbert Arenas and Caron Butler and is already sinking like a stone. You don't do it. If you do, then your position as Head Coach should be forfeited. I'm not one to readily call for a firing, but if the Cavs lose to the Wizz, then Mike Brown should be fired. He should be fired, beaten, tarred and feathered, set on fire, extinguished, re-hired, and then immediately fired again.

Losing in the 2nd round to the Raptors/Nets would also be disappointing, and should put Brown on the Hot Seat, but not fired. And the "Hot Seat" should be translated as "Eastern Conference Championship series next year or bust" in no uncertain terms.

**Tony Lastoria:** It is amazing how in one night, things went from despair to euphoria. Before the outcome on Wednesday, many fans felt a #5 seed would lead to an early exit in the first round against the Heat, or the Pistons in the second round if we got past the Heat. But, wow, did all that change when we locked up the #2 seed. Now there is not a Cavaliers fan in existence whom does not believe that a trip to the Eastern Conference Finals is well within reach, and should be a lock.

Of course, this is why you play the games. What looks good doesn't always end up good. That said, with the way things are setup for the Cavaliers in the playoffs, it would be a great disappointment if the Cavaliers did not make it to the Eastern Conference Finals. There is absolutely no excuse for that happening barring an injury to LeBron James (knock on wood) in the playoffs.

If the Cavaliers struggle against the Wizards in the first round, or against the Nets/Raptors in the second round, the Cavaliers could be ripe for an upset. And, if they are upset, head coach Mike Brown will most certainly be put on the hot seat. Now, if the Cavaliers lose to the Nets/Raptors in the second round in a well played series, I do not think he would be fired right away. But, the ultimatum would be that next year the Cavaliers need to make the NBA Finals or make a good showing in the Conference Finals, and if he does neither he is gone.

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Of course, if the Cavaliers get run out of the building in a Nets/Raptors series and get embarrassed, or heaven forbid we get beat by the worst team in the playoffs the Washington Wizards in the first round, he very well could get the guillotine treatment right away.