

The Roundtable: Was LeBron Snubbed?

Written by {ga=consigliere}

Saturday, May 12 2007 7:00 PM -

The All-NBA teams were released this past week, and the first team consisted of Tim Duncan, Dirk Nowitzki, Amare Stoudamire, Steve Nash and Kobe Bryant. To the shock of many, a certain Cleveland Cavalier by the name of LeBron James was relegated to the second team. Was LBJ snubbed? The writers of TheClevelandFan.com opine ...



"The Roundtable" 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 All-NBA teams were released this past week, and the first team consisted of Tim Duncan, Dirk Nowitzki, Amare Stoudamire, Steve Nash and Kobe Bryant. To the shock of many, a certain Cleveland Cavalier by the name of LeBron James did not make the first team, as he was relegated to the second team.

The absence of LeBron from the first team has left many people in Cleveland wondering what the voters were thinking. Look, LeBron is arguably THE face of the NBA right now along with Bryant and Dwyane Wade. Wade not being on the team makes sense as he was hurt and missed a lot of games, but LeBron not being on the first team definitely was an eye-catcher.

So, was LeBron snubbed? Is this more of the anti-Cleveland bias that seems to be running rampant in the national media in regard to the Cavaliers? Is there resentment toward “The Chosen One”, or are expectations of him too high? TheClevelandFan.com writers opine and try to make sense of the voting

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outcome...

Rich Swerbinsky: Lets be honest, LeBron sat out some games he could have played this year, and also was a noticeably different player in nationally televised games than he was when playing against teams like the Bobcats and the Bucks.

But its hard to sit here and criticize him for it with the Cavs 6-1 in the playoffs, and the team fresh off a month long winning streak when it counted most. Would Jordan, Magic, or Bird have sat those games out? No. Did they settle for jumpers and play the "lurk and lunge" defense against weak teams ... drawing the ire of national columnists? No.

But there's a couple things to remember here. One, LeBron is 22. Two, LeBron knows his body best ... and in hindsight, how he played this season out looks genius. The team got the two seed. He was not used and abused as badly as last regular season.

LeBron's coast mode is still better than 99% of the NBA. And if you take LeBron off the Cavs, they are legitimately 20 games worse in the W-L column, the greatest impact of any player in the league in my view. Being completely objective, he would have gotten my 1st team All-NBA vote over Amare Stoudamire. But he would have been the fifth guy on my first team.

John Hnat: In order to answer that question, we have to ask: who on the team would we drop in order to include LeBron? Who out of Steve Nash, Kobe Bryant, Dirk Nowitzki, Amare Stoudemire, and Tim Duncan should step aside for the King? Because if the answer is "none", then we cannot say that LeBron got the short end of the stick.

Let's go to the numbers:

LeBron: 78 G, 40.9 MPG, 27.3 PPG, 6.7 RPG, 6.0 APG, 1.6 SPG, 0.7 BPG, .476 FG%

Nash: 76 G, 35.3 MPG, 18.6 PPG, 3.5 RPG, 11.6 APG, 0.8 SPG, 0.1 BPG, .532 FG%, .899 FT%

Kobe: 77 G, 40.8 MPG, 31.6 PPG, 5.7 RPG, 5.4 APG, 1.4 SPG, 0.5

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BPG, .463 FG%

Nowitzki: 78 G, 36.2 MPG, 24.6 PPG, 8.9 RPG, 3.4 APG, 0.7 SPG, 0.8 BPG, .502 FG%, .904 FT%

Stoudemire: 82 G, 32.8 MPG, 20.4 PPG, 9.6 RPG, 1.0 APG, 1.0 SPG, 1.3 BPG, .575 FG%

Duncan: 80 G, 34.1 MPG, 20.0 PPG, 10.6 RPG, 3.4 APG, 0.8 SPG, 2.4 BPG, .546 FG%

Looking at those numbers, I don't see how Nowitzki, Stoudemire, or Duncan make it over LeBron based on individual numbers (particularly Stoudemire). And if you go by the argument that team records matter (which I do not buy), then why is Kobe there?

So yes, I believe LeBron was snubbed.

[Hiko](#): Hell yeah he was snubbed! It's a sham, I tell you, a mockery! I demand an investigation! I insist on an inquiry! The only logical explanation is that the state of Florida was in charge of 1st Team NBA voting. Conspiracy! Someone call Oliver Stone!

I certainly understand that LeBron didn't have as good a regular season in '06-'07 as he did the previous season. That, of course, is statistically speaking, and stats can lie. The merit of a player cannot be measured solely with numbers - it must be measured by his importance to his team. And I think that one would have an easy time arguing that LeBron James is one of the Top 5 Most Important Players To His Particular Team.

In the end, however, LeBron usually plays the 3 - which mean he qualifies as a Forward for voting purposes. The two

forwards that finished ahead of him? Dirk Nowitzki and Tim Duncan. Knowing what we know now, it could certainly be argued that LeBron is more important to his team than Dirk, and that he's more deserving than Dirk. But this honor - like MVP - is based upon Regular Season performance, and it is very difficult to argue that the NBA made a mistake by elevating Tim Duncan or this year's MVP to its First Team.

Perhaps the perceived snub pisses LeBron off, and motivates him to take it out on all the remaining critics. Let's hope so.

Jeff Rickel: I don't think that LeBron was snubbed when he was excluded from the All-NBA First Team. While his numbers are outstanding, I believe that the snub was due to him being lackluster by his own standards during the first half of the season. Cavs fans were not the only ones to notice that he had set his throttle to "coast" until after the All-Star break. It may be that that is unfair.

The snub ultimately came down to the fact that LeBron didn't grow and become a stronger all-around player during the regular season. He didn't live up to expectations, both those of the local fans and those of the national media, and was penalized for it.

On talent, LeBron always would sit on the first team. The seeming lack of effort is what did him in this year.

The performance is still meritorious and should be commended in some way, but LeBron needs to put forth a more consistently strong effort throughout the whole season to avoid another snub. It also wouldn't hurt if he avoided missing powder puff games like the one against Boston towards the end of the season - a game that nearly cost them the #2 seed in the NBA Playoffs.

Erik Cassano: I don't think it's much of a secret that many members of the national media have this thing about LeBron: They hate the hype.

They hate the fact that he was dubbed "The Chosen One" at 18, that he had a \$90 million shoe contract before he even played a dribble in the NBA, that he might be the this generation's defining player without having yet reached the NBA Finals, let alone win a championship.

So they take every opportunity they can to let a little air out of his balloon.

That's what the All-NBA voting reflects. Cleveland fans see 27/7/7 and their team in the second round of the playoffs. The national media voters see a

major regression from last season, and a perfect opportunity to humble the boy wonder who has had NBA megastardom served to him on a silver platter.

The voting is supposed to be objective and free from personal bias. But that just won't be the case when it comes to LeBron. Not when some members of the media throngs in New York and Los Angeles have seemingly made it a personal crusade to show the world that LeBron really isn't as good as we think he is.

But there's this thing about LeBron, too. When you doubt him, you make him mad. When you make him mad, he proves you wrong. If the All-NBA first team snub hits LeBron's ego just right, look out. He might singlehandedly carry the Cavs into the NBA Finals.

Cris Sykes: First, when is the last time the City of Cleveland had a player good enough to be in a conversation of being snubbed for an award? Albert Belle for MVP ten years ago?

To finally have this type of player is enough reason to smile.

The second reason is, LeBron does not like to be snubbed, and I fully expect the New Jersey Nets to find out how much he dislikes it.

Remember Bill Simmons ripping LeBron after the All-Star game? Well, LBJ responded with his best basketball of the season for the next couple of weeks. I fully expect James to come out and dominate the rest of the series with the Nets.

I also believe this will be good for LeBron over the long haul. He was left off the first team mainly because most people believe he did not play 82 games at a premium level. I agree with this assessment 100%, and harbor some hope that LeBron remembers this next year when some of the bottom feeders of the NBA are on the schedule. Now, if James and the Cavaliers can win the Eastern Conference this year, then the time he relaxed might have been worth it.

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However, if they make it to and then lose to the Pistons in a Game 7 at Detroit, then maybe the snubbing and that loss will teach Mr. James how important all 82 games are.