



Injury-Riddled Mavs Outscore Cavs 57-34 In Second Half

What a frustrating year to be a Cavs fan. While the team is still on pace to register their best win-loss record in almost ten years, three straight second half collapses on the road is another clear sign that this team is nowhere near ready to compete with the true powers of this league.

In the last three games, the Cavs have been dominated in the second half. Orlando outscored them 49-29. Miami owned the fourth quarter and outplayed them by a 51-42 clip in the second half. And last night, the Cavs were outscored 57-34 in the second half of a game they led by 19 at halftime.

Making matters even worse for the Cavs last night was the fact that Dallas was missing four of their top nine players. Josh Howard, Keith Van Horn, Adrian Griffin, and Devin Harris all failed to suit up for this one. The Cavs raced out to a fast start, and were taken apart at the seams out of the break. The Mavs won the third quarter by a 27-8 clip, and also scored the first six points of the fourth quarter. The eight points the Cavs scored were the fewest points allowed in a quarter in Mavericks team history. The Cavs shot 3-16 from the field in that frame, and failed to create one Dallas turnover.

Yet again, the Cavaliers lack of any type of functioning offensive sets or system were exposed. The team played nervous, settled for poor shots, and lacked any type of flow or ball movement offensively. Now 65 games into his tenure, it's clear to me that Mike Brown knows as much about offense as I do about women's

fashion.

LeBron James finished with 36 points, 12 rebounds, and 5 assists for the Cavs ... but completely disappeared for the entire third quarter, and the first ten minutes of the fourth. Zydrunas Ilgauskas had 17 and 13, but the team failed to look to him in the third to get some easy buckets to try and halt the Mavericks run. Donyell Marshall continues to be a bust of enormous proportions for this team, failing to make a bucket in 25 minutes of action.

The loss puts the capper on a 1-3 road trip for the Cavs. If there is any salvation at all right now for the Cavs, it's that their next four games are all at home and very winnable. Portland visits The Q Friday night, and the Lakers, Boston, and Charlotte all come here next week. The Cavs sit at 36-29, and still hold a two game advantage over the Pacers for the #4 seed in the East.