

A King Like Kobe?

Written by {ga=samamico}

Thursday, November 08 2007 7:00 PM -

Are the Cavaliers becoming the Eastern Conference's version of the Los Angeles Lakers? A team with one star, a bunch of mediocre role players, and little to no hope of ever winning a NBA Championship? This question is the basis of Sam Amico's most recent column, and it's a thought provoking one. Sam says that LeBron is content for now, but wonders whether or not Cavs management will ever be able to get LeBron the help needed to take things to the next level.



LeBron James nearly tallied a triple-double two nights ago in Cleveland's win at Golden State - compiling 24 points, 14 rebounds and nine assists.

After the game, he jokingly faulted the rest of the Cavs for not being able to get him that one lousy assist.

"I blame my teammates," James said with a smile. He then chuckled as he talked about how more than a few of his passes resulted in blown layups or missed jump shots.

Kidding aside, James made a valid point. Basically, it seems that in order for the Eastern Conference champs to have a chance on a given night, James needs to either: a). put up a triple-double; or b). score more than 30 points.

Heck, sometimes even doing BOTH isn't enough.

Look no further than Wednesday's 103-101 loss at Utah for proof - as James

A King Like Kobe?

Written by {ga=samamico}

Thursday, November 08 2007 7:00 PM -

erupted for 32 points, 15 rebounds and 13 assists, not to mention buried an off-balance 3-pointer to tie it with 6 seconds left. Still the Cavs couldn't get it done.

Bottom line: LeBron needs help.

And all of it makes you wonder if James and the Cavs have simply just become the East's version of the Los Angeles Lakers.

Think about it.

Like Lakers star Kobe Bryant, James is the one shining light in a rotation that's otherwise full of role players.

Like Bryant, James is still looking for someone on his team to emerge as a true point guard, someone who can run the offense and at least take THAT burden off his hands.

And like Bryant, James doesn't have a reliable sidekick. It's true that Kobe has a good one in forward Lamar Odom, but Odom has been injury prone during his days in L.A. That's even more true of the player who was supposed to be James' main man, the forever fragile Larry Hughes.

Sometimes, it's easy for basketball fans to dream and ask what if? What if the Cavs still had Carlos Boozer, or what if the Lakers still had Shaquille O'Neal (or at least had been able to get more for him at the time of the trade)?

Would the LeBron's Cavs and Kobe's Lakers be meeting in the Finals every year?

Instead, the Lakers aren't expected to get out of the first round of the playoffs with their current lineup - and we'd likely be predicting the same of the Cavs if they had to go through the West.

The good news for the Cavs is James is just 22 years old and in his fifth season (compared to Bryant, who's 29 and in season No. 12).

So there should still be time to find a prince to James' king. And who knows? Maybe it will indeed turn out to be second-year guard Daniel Gibson -- who has displayed lots of passion and a nifty shooting stroke since last season's conference finals.

A King Like Kobe?

Written by {ga=samamico}

Thursday, November 08 2007 7:00 PM -

But for the Cavs, there is a worse case scenario. Anyone who has followed the soap opera that's been Lakers basketball for the past six months understands that.

We all know Bryant has grown weary of trying to do it all, every night. He's become frustrated with management ... at one point insisting the Lakers deal for another star (read: Indiana center Jermaine O'Neal), then later saying he wanted out of Los Angeles altogether. Today, he's said to be somewhere in between.

And LeBron? He seems perfectly content in Cleveland. After all, the Cavs were in the Finals last season - regardless of whether or not the general public was impressed with their appearance, the Cavs were there.

But the playoff run may have been the best example that in Cleveland, LeBron had better do it all.

That leads us to the scary part. Namely, will Cavs management eventually be able to get James some help?

Or will the King eventually pull a Kobe, and demand a trade out of pure frustration?

It's hard to tell, but pretty soon, James may not be laughing when he blames his teammates.