

Simply Amazing

Written by {ga=samamico}
Saturday, January 05 2008 7:00 PM -

With the NFL Playoffs on yesterday, it was easy to forget about the Cavaliers 1 PM Sunday afternoon game in Toronto. But those of us that remembered to tune in got to see a little history, as LeBron James scored a Cavaliers record 24 points in the fourth quarter of the teams 93-90 win over the Raptors. LBJ finished with 39, 11, and 8 ... and Sam tells us about the amazing performance in this morning column.



It's probably safe to say that this LeBron James fella is pretty good. And the good news, Cavaliers fans, is that he plays for our team.

James' mastery was on display again Sunday -- this time in another country -- as he placed the Cavs on his shoulders (again) and lifted them to a come-from-behind 93-90 win over host Toronto.

All James did this time was score 24 points in the fourth quarter by making eight of 10 shots. That's right James scored 24 points in the fourth -- or more than the other 21 players on the court scored for the entire GAME. To give you a better idea how dominant James was, he scored more in the final eight minutes than the Raptors' bench (11 points) and the Cavs' bench (20) combined.

"He just took the game over and put us on his back," said Cavs coach Mike Brown, before making the first understatement of 2008. "What a

tremendous, tremendous performance."

James expressed it in more vivid terms, saying it was as if he were on some sort of basketball island.

"I just felt like I was out there by myself," he said. "Everything was going right for me and I just felt like I was out there in practice. The hoop felt like the ocean."

For James and the Cavs, the fourth quarter was a far cry from the rest of the afternoon. They looked sluggish, even uninterested, in falling behind by as many as 20 points. They trailed 70-57 at the end of the third. It looked like Team Schizophrenia was back in full force, as the Cavs appeared to be in one of those modes where no one can tell if they're really any good.

They win a couple at home, look like they're gonna get their act together, then have a stinker in Toronto. Or so it seemed. But as we should know by now, with LeBron, all basketball things are possible.

"This was impressive because of the circumstances," Cavs forward Drew Gooden said of James' late spurt. "We were down 20 on the road and we could have easily given in. He was attacking the basket and knocking down outside shots."

By the way, James finished with 39 points.

All of this is more amazing when you consider James' third quarter. He threw up a couple of airballs. He missed a dunk. He looked as if the 1 p.m. tip-off actually took place at 7 a.m., making just six of his first 19 shots.

Simply Amazing

Written by {ga=samamico}

Saturday, January 05 2008 7:00 PM -

"He wasn't as aggressive as in the last quarter," center Zydrunas Ilgasukas said. "He settled for some jump shots. They blitzed him a lot. We changed our offense a little bit for him (in the fourth) and it opened up."

While it seemed like James had to do everything himself (as always), there were a few other promising signs in the win. Perhaps none more than the fact Cavs guard Larry Hughes shot 50 percent from the field (6-of-12, 14 points).

Also, the Cavs again dominated in the rebounding department, grabbing 52 to the Raptors' 33. Anderson Varejao proved invaluable on the boards, coming off the bench to snare 13. Gooden had 12 (with 10 points) and James had 11.

Finally, it's getting to where the Cavs don't win unless they get a big 3-pointer from reserve guard Daniel Gibson. This once came shortly after James hit a layup to put the Cavs up 86-84. Gibson's 3 gave them a five-point lead and took the air out of the Raptors.

Forward Chris Bosh scored 23 to lead the Raptors, and shooting guard Anthony Parker added 20. Point guard Jose Calderon added 16 points and a game-high 11 assists.

Meanwhile, James missed compiling his first triple-double since before spraining his finger nearly a month ago by two assists. He finished with eight.