

Cavs Bounce Back In Indy

Written by {ga=hermanfontenot}
Wednesday, February 20 2008 7:00 PM -

The bad news: the Cavaliers have faced a heaping helping of adversity this season in the form of holdouts, injuries, and other assorted maladies. The good news: time and time again, they've managed to overcome it, at least in the short term. They did so again in Conseco Fieldhouse, battling through yet another ankle injury, this one to Boobie Gibson, and besting the Pacers 106-97.



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Get well soon, Boobie!

Game Recap by Quarter

First Quarter

It wasn't exactly reminiscent of the Bird-Dominique duel from the '88 playoffs, but Drew Gooden and Danny Granger had a nice little back-and-forth as the game opened. Gooden popped for six points in the first couple of minutes and Granger, who always seems to kill the Cavaliers, scored 11 of Indiana's first 13 points, at least temporarily assuaging the absence of Jermaine O'Neal and Jamaal Tinsley. Despite missing their main man inside, the Pacers were aggressive, getting to the free-throw line nine times in the period, and making all nine.

LeBron was somewhat passive early, at least in terms of looking for his own shot. (He passed and rebounded brilliantly, as usual.) But near the end of the period, with Cleveland down two, the King went to work, scoring seven quick points on a left-handed baby hook, a jumper in transition, and a driving three-point play. The hot-shooting Cavaliers (14-of-21 from the field in the first) used LBJ's heroics to take off on an 11-3 period-ending run, making it 34-26 Cleveland at the end of one.

Second Quarter

A spate of Cavalier turnovers gave the Pacers an opportunity to get back in it as the second period opened. An 11-3 run sent Indiana into a 39-37 lead and, with Granger, Mike Dunleavy and Troy Murphy hot from outside, the Pacers maintained the advantage until LeBron re-entered the fray at the 5:11 mark. A Gooden three-point play and a Boobie Gibson trifecta (his fourth of the half without a miss) gave Cleveland a

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50-45 lead. The Pacers pulled back into a 50-50 tie, but just as they had in the first period, the Cavaliers finished the half strong. They ripped off a 10-4 run on a Gooden jumper, a pair of threes by Gibson and Larry Hughes off LeBron feeds, and a Hughes slash to the bucket with six seconds left. At halftime, it was 60-54 in favor of the Cavaliers.

Cleveland shot 60% in the first half, dished out 14 assists (nine by LeBron), and out-rebounded the Pacers 19-16; the problems were turnovers (ten) and 13-of-15 shooting from the foul line by Indiana to 4-of-7 for the Wine & Gold. Gibson, who shoots three-pointers like lay-ups these days, was 5-of-5 from downtown and Gooden had 16 on 7-of-9 from the floor; Granger led the way for Indiana with 18.

Third Quarter

The teams traded 5-0 runs to start the second half- Indiana's to make it 60-59 and Cleveland's to extend the lead back out to six. A 13-1 Pacers run, spearheaded by the unconscious Troy Murphy put them in the lead 72-66 at 5:56 of the third. Then, after a LeBron jumper cut it to 72-68, disaster struck: during a scramble for a loose ball, Travis Diener rolled over Boobie Gibson's leg, sending the youngster to the floor writhing in pain. Boobie was helped off the floor, putting very little pressure on the leg, and the Cavaliers had suffered yet another injury to yet another vital cog. At the end of three, with Gibson's status unknown as of yet, the Cavaliers trailed, 81-79.

Fourth Quarter

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Neither team was able to sustain a run as the fourth quarter began. The news on Boobie Gibson came in: a left ankle sprain, and he was done for the night. With 6:35 left Hughes made a spectacular block on a would-be dunk by Granger, but the big play failed to ignite Cleveland's offense, and the game remained tight. Indiana's biggest lead for the first seven minutes of the period was three; Cleveland's, two. LeBron yanked down his tenth rebound, giving him his second triple-double in as many nights- yet the game remained to be won.

Zydrunas Ilgauskas had been poor from the floor all night, but he finally found his stroke late in the fourth quarter. First he drilled a twenty-footer to tie the game 94-94; then, after he had split a pair of free throws to give the Cavaliers a one-point lead, the big fella knocked out a baseline jumper to give Cleveland its biggest lead of the period, 97-94, with 3:17 left.

The Z-led spurt seemed to unnerve the short-handed Pacers. A Travis Diener foul and a subsequent Jim O'Brien technical (Indiana's second T of the period) led to a pair of made free throws and a 99-94 lead at 2:45. The Pacers missed down low, and the Cavaliers held the ball for nearly a minute, their possession lengthened by a pair of clutch offensive rebounds by Devin Brown and Z. With 1:39 left, Hughes drilled a three-pointer to neatly wrap up the 10-0 run and make it 102-94. And that was it. Cleveland 106, Indiana 97.

Odds and Ends

How the game was won: Fourth-quarter defense and solid

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rebounding was once again the critical double-barreled factor in the victory. After scoring 26, 28, and 27 points in the first three periods, the Pacers were held to 16 in the fourth, as Cleveland finally got around to defending the pick-and-pops that were money for Indiana most of the night. The Cavaliers also won the rebounding battle 45-39, and came up big on the offensive glass throughout the fourth period.

LeBron's line: 31 points, 14 boards, and 12 assists on 11-of-22 shooting, including a 22-point second half. Apparently this is the first time an NBA player has picked up a triple-double on back-to-back nights since the league started recording these kinds of feats.

Other heroes: A number of supporting players stepped up. Z shot just 5-of-13 but made those critical hoops in the fourth quarter and yanked down 17 rebounds. Boobie scored 15 points in 19 minutes before his injury, Gooden went for 17, and Hughes for 19, including an outstanding effort in the last period.

Next: The Wizards come to town for an ESPN-televvised clash at 8:00 on Friday night.