

Losers of two straight, missing the hobbled Sasha Pavlovic and Boobie Gibson, and without Wally World as he gets set to have his third kid ... the shorthanded Cavs toyed with, then "dropped the hammer down" on a young Minnesota Timberwolves team tonight at The Q. LeBron was fantastic, Delonte was scrappy, Damon stayed hot, and Big Ben continued to look rejuvenated. And Brian McPeck tells us all about the win in his latest column.



Out of all 82 games on the schedule this season, well, this was one of them.

The Cavs looked disinterested and disjointed for much of the night before finally, as Austin Carr might say 35 times a night, "throwing the hammer down" and putting away the Minnesota Timberwolves 92-84 Friday night at 'The Q'.

Thankfully, The 'Wolves are the 'easy button' of the NBA.

Stop me if you've heard this before, but LeBron James led the Cavs with 30 points, 9 rebounds and 13 assists. Devin Brown, Delonte West, Damon Jones and Zydrunas Ilgauskas all scored in double figures to support James.

Al Jefferson and Cory Brewer led the 'Wolves with 22 points and 15 points

respectively. If those two guys can somehow double that production each night Minnesota might just get to mediocre.

Loved It

- Delonte West is spectacular.

Well, actually he's not. But when you watch him run an offense after watching Larry Hughes and Eric Snow attempt the same feat, you sure do appreciate West's efficiency. West scored 12 points, dished out 5 assists, grabbed 3 rebounds and blocked two shots. His last hoop *was* spectacular. He came up with a loose ball near the Minnesota foul line, sprinted up the center of the court, went behind the back with his dribble to leave a defender grasping at air and finished the play with a two-handed dunk to put the game away and put an exclamation point on the evening.

And West is no dummy. He's quickly learned that the quickest way to a Cavs fan's heart is via an assist to a dunking James. West set up James with a majority of his 5 assists, including one for a James dunk and another for a James three-pointer. He also plays hard all night long. West was as quick in his 42nd minute of play as he was at the tip. He's shown hands as quick as his feet thus far in Cleveland too. West is a proficient shot blocker for a guard as he makes a habit of blocking shots by getting to the basketball before an opponent can get it up over his head to release a shot. It's early in his Cavalier career, but there's a lot to like with West's game from what we've seen so far.

- It's enjoyable watching a thus-far rejuvenated Ben Wallace play alongside Z. It frees both of them up to do what they do

best. Wallace can fly at the ball, gather large numbers of rebounds and cause havoc on the defensive end. Z can play help defense, gather a few boards and slide to the elbow for his 15-foot jumper. Granted, it's worked much better against Memphis and Minnesota than it did against Boston for some reason, but it would appear it's only going to get better with time. The Cavs schedule allows for that development.

- LBJ has gotten to the point where you're disappointed if he doesn't walk away each night with a triple-double. He's that ridiculously good. And to be honest, he's *close* to doing it every single night. He's now got some guys who can hit open shots so his assist totals should only climb during the remainder of the season.

- Let's give it up for Damon Jones. The quote machine has been riding a wave of late. Jones is knocking down open shots and is also ball faking that three-point shot and hitting some mid range jumper as well. He's much more entertaining when he mixes in a few makes with his constant chatter. In fact, some people swear they saw him take a ball to the rim for a bucket and a free throw against Minnesota. We're still trying to verify if that was the case.

Hated It

- I heard it 14 times on Friday night. 14 times I listened to Austin Carr refer to LeBron as "The LLLLLLLLL-Train". And then Carr gave the same grinding chuckle after each of them. It's now beyond painful to watch a FSN telecast. Yes, Carr did diversify a little bit. There were eight "The L-Train with a head of steam" musings and six "The L-Train throws the hammer down". So he did mix things up a bit.

I pray that Dan Gilbert listens to these telecasts at some point. And that he gives Carr a ride on the Michael Reghi train right back into the Cavs Community Affairs department.

- Harmony is going to be paramount for this team. It'd sure be nice to see a guy like Wallace be rewarded for his defensive efforts with the occasional look down low. Someone needs to throw that dog a bone and keep him interested. That's likely going to have to come from LBJ initially so that West and the rest of the squad join in on the fun. Keeping the big guys well fed tends to keep up their intensity.

Finally

Old friends Larry Hughes and Drew Gooden come back to town Sunday when the Bulls visit Quicken Loans Arena. Should be an interesting ballgame. If not for the game itself then at least for the player introductions and the in-game action with Wallace, Hughes and Gooden all facing former teammates.

Most Cleveland fans have nothing against Hughes personally. But he can probably expect a cavalcade of boos and catcalls when he takes the floor Sunday afternoon at 1pm. Gooden is a different story. Despite his inadequacies he seems to be a guy goofy enough to shrug off the moment and just go play. Just for old times sake though, I'd like to see LeBron whistle a perfect pass of Gooden's head just one more time.