



Just rewatched the game on DVR. Some thoughts ...

~LB Freaking J. Good lord. What a performance. 32, 11, and 11 ... and I counted 9 of those 11 assists as being incredibly impressive. No look passes on drives to the bucket, cross court passes out of double and triple teams to someone open for 3 on the other side of the court. By my count, he was personally responsible for about 60 of the Cavs 97 points, and played all 48 minutes. Biggest sequence of the game in my mind was when LeBron made a 18-18 game 30-18 in less than 2 minutes. A three. A big board and a coast-to-coast 3-point play. 3 foul shots on drives to the bucket. And a great kick out to Donyell for 3. Game, set, match. Amazing.

~With the exception of Drew Gooden and Flip Murray, I thought the Cavs played phenomenal defense. They rotated well, and forced the Wizards into many poor shots with less than 6-7 seconds on the 24-second clock. Defense is played between the ears, and the Cavs were positioned and spaced well all game. Their transition defense was superb, stopping the ball and making a potential fast break very uncomfortable nearly every time the Wizards tried to get out and run. They even mixed in a 3-2 zone on some possessions. Big, big ups to Mike Brown for the defensive game plan. Superb.

~Arenas was a non-factor. Had 9 points through three quarters. Larry Hughes did an amazing job in the first quarter, as did Snow in the second. The third quarter? Eddie Jordan stopped him, inexplicably sitting him for the last 7 minutes of it despite Gil having just 3 fouls. In possessions where Hughes checked Arenas in the half court setting, I had Arenas for just one basket all game, that impressive drive and dunk early in the 4th. Jamison and Butler had great seasons, but terrible games. Forced shots, frustration, and abuse on the defensive end every time they tried to check LBJ. Defensively, Jamison seems to have lost his 1st step on the perimeter since his knee problems last year. I pray they continue to send him at LeBron on D. He abused him.

~Led by Donyell, the Cavs were great on the offensive glass, which I see as a big key in this series. The Wizards are not a great defensive rebounding team, but when they do grab a board, they like to get the ball to the outlet guy and fast break. The Cavs did a great job on the offensive glass, limiting these opportunities, and then did a great job halting or interrupting the fast break when they did get the board and the outlet.

~The Wizards bench is god awful outside of Antonio Daniels. Billy Thomas? Donnell Taylor? These guys wouldn't even make the Cavs roster and they're the 8th and 9th guys on this team. Cavs bench outscored the Wizards bench 32-16, and 14 of those points were from Daniels, who torched Flip Murray for 12 of them by my count. Daniels has been very good in the second half of the season and is a different player from the one earlier in his career that had little to no offensive game. With LeBron likely to never leave the floor, the Cavs are a much better team than Washington once these teams go to the pines.

~The Wizards are a soft team that is easy to score on in the paint. Haywood is a joke. They are long, but have no muscle. Everyone on the team tried to check LeBron, and I thought Arenas did the best job of all of em. The Wiz have no presence inside to thwart LBJ, I would use Arenas and his quickness on LeBron defensively to try and keep him from the paint. However, that will wear Arenas down, and likely affect his offense.

Quick thoughts on each non-LBJ Cavs player ... in order of how well I thought they played:

Donyell: Phenomenal game. This is the Donyell I knew, loved, and was ecstatic we signed this off-season. Did a great job on Jamison. Hit threes. Took the ball to the hole with authority. 6 offensive rebounds. Good, good stuff.

ESnow: 5-7 from the floor, one turnover, solid defense all night on the perimeter, including a real nice stretch of play against Arenas in the 2nd.

Zydrunas: Only 10 and 6 in 30 minutes but blocked 2 shots and changed 4-5 others. Played well overall.

Varejao: HUGE 2nd quarter that helped sustain and lengthen the lead. Set 4-5 big picks on offense that led to buckets. Great help defense, which is Gooden's biggest weakness. Reminds me more and more of Rodman each day.

Hughes: His offense is clearly still not there, but he did a very good job defensively, only getting scored upon 2-3 times max and forcing several bad shots.

Gooden: Was pulled with 2 min left in the 1st quarter after getting beat twice in a row coming over late from the weak side. Only really played the 1st 8 minutes of

the second half as well. Did notch 10 and 7 in the 18 minutes he played, but Brown has shown all season that he will not put up with mental errors on the defensive end.

Flip: Played 34 minutes, second most on the team behind King James. Had 10 points, but gave up at least 20 on the defensive end.

Damon Jones: Three minutes played, 1 assist, no shots taken.