

Cavs/Wizards: The Good, The Bad, & The Summary

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That was a lot closer than anybody thought it would be. The Washington Wizards - losers of seven straight and owners of a 4-22 record heading into last night's game - gave the Cavs everything they could handle. The Wizards led most of the game, including a seven-point lead with less than two minutes remaining, and looked like they were going to hand the Cavs their first home loss of the season. That's when the Cavs suddenly remembered that they are the Cavs, and that the Wizards are the Wizards. The man, the myth, the Hnat gives us The Good, The Bad, & The Summary of the Cavs latest win.



THE SUMMARY:

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That's when the Cavs suddenly remembered that they are the Cavs, and that the Wizards are the Wizards. Cleveland ran off the final 11 points of the game to win 93-89 last night at Quicken Loans Arena. The win was the Cavs' fifth in a row and improved their record to 25-4. Cleveland now leads Detroit by 8.5 games in the Central Division. Even

better, the Celtics finally lost yesterday, so Cleveland is now only 1.5 games behind Boston for the best mark in the Eastern Conference (and the league, for that matter).

Mo Williams led the Cavs with 24 points, including a huge three-pointer with 1:02 remaining that cut the Washington lead to one point. Delonte West and LeBron James added 18 apiece. (*That's right - LeBron was the THIRD player mentioned when going through the list of Cleveland's top scorers.* □ *Somebody note the date.*

) Anderson Varejao chipped in with 13 points and 13 rebounds (later, on his way to the locker room, he walked under a ladder while a black cat dashed across his path). The Wizards' Antawn Jamison led everybody with 28 points.

Going into the game, most observers would have predicted significant playing time for **The Tarence Kinsey Brigade**. The Cavs were lucky to get the victory at all. But an ugly win is still better than any kind of loss.

It's the NBA. Where "any given team, on any given night (unless you're the Oklahoma City Thunder) ..." happens.

WHAT I LIKED ABOUT THE GAME:

Honestly? Not a lot. I should be in a more charitable mood - it is Christmas, after all, and the Cavs did win - but I'm going to

grade on a tough curve this morning. (It probably has something to do with writing some variation of "wow, the Cavs played great again!" in virtually every other game review so far this season.)

I'll give props to West, who drained five more three-pointers and is becoming one of the game's more potent long-range threats, but that's about it. Oh, let's give some love to Varejao as well - double-digit points and rebounds for a reserve is never an easy accomplishment.

Now let's put lumps of coal in some stockings, shall we?

WHAT I DIDN'T LIKE ABOUT THE GAME:

Relax. It's Not Like He'll Be Here For Long: It doesn't happen often - a handful of times per season - but every month or two, LeBron has the kind of game where the Cavs actually would have been better off had he called in sick. The boxscore tells some of the story: Bron had a well-below-average 18 points, six assists, five rebounds, and made six of his 13 shots from the field (and only six

of ten from the free throw line). His shot was off, and he looked lethargic, as though he'd had one slice too many of the Christmas turkey.

In fact, LeBron wasn't even the best player with the last name of "James" on the floor last night. That would be Washington's Mike James, a career journeyman who hit 10 of 14 shots from the field (including 5 of 8 from long range) for 26 points. Which brings us to our next point...

Yes, You Can Lead The Team In Scoring And Still End Up Here: Williams may have scored 24 points to lead the Cavs, but he seemed to surrender even more at the other end of the floor. He was guarding Mike James for much of the time that James was hot ... and Mike James should not be hot. It's Williams's job to ensure that Mike James stays at room temperature or below; and last night, it wasn't happening.

Too Much Of A Good Thing: The Cavs attempted 31 shots from three-point range. Yes, they made 12 of

them, for a respectable 39% shooting percentage, but that's still about 15 too many attempts. It's not like Andray Blatche (the Wizards' starting center) is a feared presence in the paint. Pound the ball inside, and then pound it inside some more!

Too Much Of A Bad Thing: 16 turnovers on the game. Nine turnovers in the third quarter alone. Yecch.

Huh?: Over-and-back violations are pretty rare in the NBA, and it usually takes a pretty good brain cramp (or a very errant pass) to get whistled for one. In the second quarter, the Cavs advanced the ball past midcourt to LeBron, who then threw it back to West. Problem was, West was on the other side of the time line (he did jump to receive the pass and landed with both feet on the Cavs' side of the court, but it still counted as a violation).

Darius Miles called; he wants his brain back.

Maybe, Just Maybe, His Ankle Isn't Fully Healed:

Zydrunas Ilgauskas's last three games: four points against Oklahoma City; 11 points against Houston; and then five points last night against Washington.

Be Careful What You Wish For: In [the last GBS](#), I groused about Fox Sports Ohio's penchant for using the baseline camera angle, especially on breakaway dunks. Fortunately, last night's game was on TNT, which meant no baseline camera.

Don't get too excited though. (*In fact, don't get excited at all.* Other than me and frequent GBS correspondent Mike Kraus, nobody cares about this issue. But it's an outrage, I tell you. An outrage!

) Early in the third quarter, LeBron stole a pass and had an uncontested dunk at the other hoop. As Bron took flight, TNT switched to an aerial camera angle that may have been even more useless than the baseline view.

NOT THAT YOU ASKED, BUT...

If Nike Did More Of *These* Ads, They'd Get Their \$90 Million Worth

:□ For those of you who have been wondering, "why is it that we've never seen a commercial with LeBron James singing Cyndi Lauper songs?" [your wish has come true](#)

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It makes me ask whether there is embarrassing music in the average NBA locker room. Imagine that before a big game, a scowling Ben Wallace lumbers to the sound system in the locker room, cranks up the volume all the way ... and out pours the intro to "Rock Me Amadeus". Or "You Light Up My Life". Or something by Milli Vanilli.

Not that any of us should be throwing stones out of that glass house! I'm sure that every last one of you who are reading these words owns at least one song that you'd rather not admit to owning. Now's

your time to come clean! [Let me know](#) the song (or songs) that you enjoy. The cheesier, the better. (And just in case your song should ever find its way into a future installment of this column, let me know if you'd rather remain anonymous.)

Speaking Of Nike And LeBron: All fans in attendance last night received a small packet of confetti to throw in the air at the moment that James performed his ritual of throwing powder in the air just prior to the opening tip.

As I type these words, there is a Quicken Loans Arena janitor who is cursing the day he was born.

Some People Want A Lexus For Christmas; Not Me: Not that I want to suggest that the Cavs should be looking ahead to any deadline deals or anything, but I have it on good authority that Cavs GM Danny Ferry received this note after the game:

Dear Danny,

*Great game tonight. We don't **GET** the chance to play on Christmas often, so it was really special to **ME***

*.
Coach Brown sure has your guys playing their hearts **OUT***

*. It's really a breath **OF** fresh air.*

*Looking forward to seeing you next weekend in **WASHINGTON***

.

Regards,

Antawn

If You Have Any Room Left In Your Stomach, Here You Go: Now it's time for a serious story, and one with a holiday twist. A couple of months ago, the owners of the Archway cookie factory in Ashland, Ohio shut the plant down, putting 300 people out of work (and without benefits) just in time for the holiday season. It goes without saying that the last thing northeast Ohio needs is another employer closing its doors.

Fortunately, [Lance, Inc.](#) bought Archway. And then they did a funny thing. They [reopened the Ashland plant](#), gave all of the laid-off workers \$1,500 debit cards, and re-hired 60 of them (and hope to bring back more of them in the coming months). Those debit cards gave the laid-off workers a chance to have presents under the tree this Christmas; those jobs will hopefully give at least some of them a chance to

have presents under the tree next year too.

Not sure about you, but the next time I buy cookies (after getting past the flood of holiday treats, that is), it'll be something from Lance/Archway.

WHAT LIES AHEAD:

The Cavs will close out 2008 with a home-and-home series with Miami, facing the Heat at Quicken Loans Arena on Sunday, and then again in Miami on Tuesday evening.