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The Chicago Bulls stepped in front of a focused and motivated Cavalier club last

night and they will have the tire tracks on their chests to prove it for the next few days.

LeBron James picked up his first triple-double of the season as the Cavs threw the hammer down on the Bulls Friday night in 'The Q' 117-92. James had 16 points, 11 assists and 10 rebounds to lead the Cavs to their 27th win of the season.

Anderson Varejao was the beneficiary on a number of LBJ's passes en route to the biggest scoring night of his career. Varejao did what he does around the basket in picking up loose balls for points and keeping possessions alive but he also moved extremely well without the basketball and converted a number of dunks and lay-ins off James feeds. AV also showed a nice touch from the 10 foot range in scoring 26 points to go along with 8 boards.

You also can't overlook the man's work that Ben Wallace did on Friday night. Big Ben chipped in a season high 13 points, yanked down 9 rebounds, blocked two shots and said zero words all night long. There are some reports circulating that he may have mumbled to himself a few times but Wallace continues to bring the effort and defensive intensity as well as an intimidating inside presence.

Ben Gordon led the Bulls with 22 points. Larry Hughes led the Bulls with 8 missed shots from the floor. Had he taken 20 shots this would be acceptable. But he took only nine, made only one and was basically invisible Friday night.

Takeaways

- Some things in sports are breathtakingly beautiful; a perfectly thrown fade route for a TD, the left-handed swing of John Olerud and any play where Omar Vizquel had to range behind 2nd base to make a play come to mind. But watching LeBron James pass the basketball is inching up that list. James's size, strength and scoring ability is known and appreciated even by casual fans. But when he's one day inducted into the Hall of Fame there will be people who put him up with the very best passers the game has ever seen.

On multiple occasions Friday night James not only saw cutters and open shooters but hit them perfectly. Go back and watch that game and look at where LBJ got Delonte West, Varejao, Daniel Gibson and Sasha Pavlovic the rock. There was nothing for any of them to do except catch the ball at chest level, find the seams and get off their shot. No reaching whatsoever, no lunging for an errant pass that would take them out of their rhythm. Damn near every pass was in the perfect spot for these guys to catch and shoot.

Not happy with just being perfect, James was creative Friday night as well. Whether it was a behind the back wrap-around bounce pass to a cutting Varejao for a lay-up, a bouncing skip pass to shooters open behind the arc or a one handed, snapping look-away through the

paint James had it all going on.

- Ben Wallace gets a little love tonight after scoring 13 points and grabbing ten boards but truth be told, Wallace has been a key part of this early Cavalier success. Big Ben is looking relatively healthy and relatively interested, two things he wasn't in his time with the Bulls last season. Wallace is bringing intensity and a menacing post presence on the majority of nights for this club. Not only is he blocking a lot of shots but he's altering countless more and having guys re-think even going to the rim right now. He doesn't say crap even with a mouthful of it, but Wallace and Varejao being as active and defensively oriented as they are make the Cavs a really rough night for most NBA teams.

- Every time you hear anything having to do with the feet and ankles of Zydrunas Ilgauskas there is breath holding to be done. No different this time as it was announced before tonight's game that Z would miss this one against the Bulls and, in all likelihood, probably the next couple week's worth of basketball games. Further examinations of Z's ankle show a small fracture that apparently wasn't seen (or there) when Ilgauskas initially hurt that ankle a month or so ago. The Cavs will be extremely cautious with their big man and it'll be critical

for Wallace and Varejao to maintain their current pace. Not necessarily in points as the Cavs have guys that can carry that burden. But Wallace and AV need to stay on the court and provide that defensive presence with one less experienced big man to rely on.

- 25 assists on 40 FGs for the Cavs Friday night. That's moving the basketball and it's a reason why the Cavs shot better than 50% from the floor against the Bulls. Well, there's also the fact that the Bulls are a disorganized wreck whenever they see wine and gold colored uniforms right now, but the unselfishness and passing certainly helps. The Cavs took only 15 three-point shots Friday night and converted 7 of them. You'll take that over the 9/27 in the Miami game last Tuesday any day.

They Got Next

It's a matinee in the nation's capital on Sunday afternoon for the Cavaliers. That's a 1pm start

against Antawn Jamison and a Wizards team that gave the Cavs all they wanted and then some on Christmas night.

After that one it's a Wednesday home game against Charlotte and then the much anticipated showdown with the Celtics on Friday at 'The Q'.