

Apparently Mike Brown addressed that disturbing lack of focus thing. Just in time too. Because the appetizers like the Washington Wizards and Charlotte Bobcats are done and gone. The Celtics are next. Friday night baby. Peeks looks back on last night's blowout win over the Bobcats, and looks ahead to the Celtics game.



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The Cavaliers put the Charlotte Bobcats out of their misery early and then dutifully carried them to the finish line of a 111-81 assault at 'The Q' Wednesday night. You know how sometimes you'll see it written or hear it said that the final score wasn't indicative of the battle? Well, this score was indicative of the battle. Actually, a bagged body in a trunk would have been an appropriate image of how this game went down.

No Cavalier played more than 34 minutes, every Cavalier played and all but one Cavalier scored at least a couple of points. LeBron James led the Cavs with 21

points in 31 minutes on the floor. He and his mates went for the throat early and LBJ was an efficient 9/16 from the floor and added 4 rebounds and 4 assists before sleeping through the final 15 minutes of clock.

Wally Szczerbiak, Mo Williams and Daniel Gibson all scored 15 points to support LBJ and Anderson Varejao added another 14 points and 6 boards as the Cavs go to 28-6 on the season.

Charlotte slipped to 13-23 with the loss. The Bobcats were led by Raymond Felton and Gerald Wallace who score 15 and 14 points respectively.

Takeaways

- Anderson Varejao needed to step up his offensive game and become a consistent scoring threat in order to lessen the effect of losing Zydrunas Ilgauskas for a month. Well, AV has done all that and more. You're watching the development of a complete basketball player every night AV steps out onto the court. Varejao would always be a threat to put back the loose balls and tips due to his hustle. He was always a threat on the pick and roll with LBJ because he's athletic enough and smart enough to run it with, as Austin Carr likes to say, 'supple hands' that can handle the passes that LBJ gets him.

But now Varejao is developing some other tools that he lacked prior to this season. He's got a nice little turnaround jumper from 12-15 feet and making that more effective is that he's also shown the ability to hit the little baby hook. AV will drop that running hook on you in the lane and then show it to you again the next

time. That's when he'll hit the turnaround on you.

You can't consider AV just the scrappy Brazilian dude who causes havoc and hustles. He's becoming a more complete player every day. Time on the practice floor and confidence as a result of some success can be a powerful combination.

- A huge part of the Cavs monster 1st half was a result of Daniel Gibson and Wally Szczerbiak finally going off from three point land on the same evening. Gibson, on his bobble head night, stroked 3/4 from long range and Wally did not miss. He was 3/3 from 3-point range.

The Cavs were 7/14 from deep as a team and its really becoming clear that this team is far more effective when they're putting up 12-18 3-point shots per night as opposed to 20+. Gibson and Wally knocking down open looks created off of LBJ or Mo Williams penetration is fine. But taking those shots without the penetration just shouldn't happen regularly.

They Got Next

- We all know what's next. This upcoming ballgame has been circled on the calendar for nearly a month. On the forum boards the game thread for this one started on December 23rd. You could say people are looking forward to the match up.

You could also say that the Celtics are limping into this match up with their tails between their legs. The C's have lost 6 of their last 8 ballgames including an OT loss to the very same Charlotte team that the Cavs destroyed Wednesday night.

That's 2-6 in their last games. For perspective, that's the same winning percentage that the Browns finished their season with.

Still, this is clearly a match up of the two Eastern Conference favorites. No disrespect to Orlando as they are having a great season this far, but this is the game people are talking about and that ESPN is showing Friday night.

This is the chance for the Cavs not only to make a statement to the league about just how deep and talented they are, but they can really kick the Celtics while they're down. And we all know it's easier to kick someone when they're down than actually bending down to punch them. But more importantly, it's a chance to even the season series at 1-1 and gain a full game in the EC in the race for home court advantage.

It's going to be a good one. The Celtics are proud and aware of what's at stake and they're not going to go down here without a fight, regardless of their current skid.

Buckle up fans. Should be an enjoyable ride Friday night.

After that it's on the road to Memphis (Tuesday, 8pm) and then to Chicago (Thursday, 8pm) before heading back to 'The Q' Friday night to face Chris Paul and the Hornets.