

If you went to bed before the end of the Cavs game against Golden State early Saturday morning you can be forgiven. The game didn't go final until 1:20am local time. But if you went to bed before the end of the Cavs against the Warriors early Saturday morning you missed an early candidate for Game of the Year honors. It was certainly the finish of the year thus far. Brian McPeck did stay up, and he writes about the Cavs exhilarating win against Golden State in his latest.



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LeBron James hit a step back 18-foot jumper over Ronny Turiaf with the backboard ringed in red and the clock down to zeroes to give the Cavs an incredible win over a Warrior team that played out of their minds nearly all night.

Stephen Jackson hit an assassin's jumper in the face of James with 6.4 seconds left to give Golden State a 105-104 lead. But after a near turnover on the inbound play that followed a Cavaliers timeout, James received the inbound pass from Mo Williams, feinted to the lane to give himself some space, then stepped back and measured the game winner that left his hand with .1 seconds left on the clock.

The reserves exploded off the bench and celebrated the shot and the win that survived an official's replay review.

James led the Cavaliers with 32 points, 9 rebounds and 8 assists on the night. Williams added 14 points despite missing all 7 of his first half shots. Stephen Jackson and Cory Maggette led the Warriors with 24 and 23 points respectively and each pulled down 8 boards.

### Takeaways

- When Tarence Kinsey gets 15 minutes of floor time in a game against Golden State you'd expect that the final margin of victory in the game would be 20+ points one way or the other. But Kinsey was inserted into the ballgame far earlier than most of us are accustomed to and he answered the bell. Kinsey stepped onto the floor at the tail end of a 16-2 Golden State run and immediately energized the Cavaliers. A 24-4 Cavalier run followed Kinsey onto the floor and Kinsey scored seven of those points, including two on a fast break dunk that was as surprising as it was critical to the Cavs cause. On the night Kinsey scored 11 points on 3/5 shooting and he converted 5/7 from the line. Kinsey might be the Cavs 'Human Victory Cigar' on most nights but on this night in Oakland he was an integral part of the Cavalier win.

- Lost in the jubilation of James' game winner was a huge jump shot that Ben Wallace knocked down. Down 94-90 and with a short shot clock, Wallace found the ball in his hands and about 16 feet from the basket. Wallace never hesitated in putting up a high-arcing 16-footer that found nothing but the bottom of the hole and kept the Cavs in a ballgame that the Warriors were working toward closing out.

- The Cavs were playing their 3<sup>rd</sup> game in 4 nights with the specter of the 4<sup>th</sup> in 5 nights in Utah Saturday night hanging over them. They needed a huge night from their bench not only to stay with a game Warriors squad but also if they hoped to have any type of energy against the Jazz. They got all they could ask for from Kinsey, Wally Szczerbiak, Daniel Gibson and J.J Hickson. 40 points, 11 rebounds and 4 assists from the bench bunch was music to Mike Brown's ears Friday night.

- A win is a win in the Association no matter how you get it but the Cavs are fortunate to have gone into Oracle Arena and gotten a 'W' despite allowing the Warriors to dictate the tempo of the ball game. There are some nights when the Cavaliers, despite being as good a defensive team as there is in the league, seem to want to revert back to the run and gun style. That's an example of some growth potential this version of the Cavaliers still has. The Warriors are 13-31 for a reason: they play no defense. Getting drawn into a shootout with a team that is comfortable in only that type of game is a fine way to get beaten. The Cavs have become a team capable of dictating tempo and forcing their style on other clubs. They need to realize that and take advantage of it going forward. Especially when every game is going to count in the battle for the Eastern Conference.

- As mentioned above, the Cavaliers will be playing their 4<sup>th</sup> game in 5 nights Saturday against the Jazz. Throw in the fact that the Jazz have had a couple days of rest and preparation time and it could be a long night in Salt Lake City. It'll be

interesting to see how the Cavs respond in a difficult place to play under any circumstances, much less this specific situation.

## **They Got Next**

The Cavs get a little time for rest and recuperation following Saturday's game in Utah (9pm). They'll be home Tuesday to face the Sacramento Kings (7pm) before heading down to Orlando on Thursday for a big ball game with the Magic (8pm, TNT).