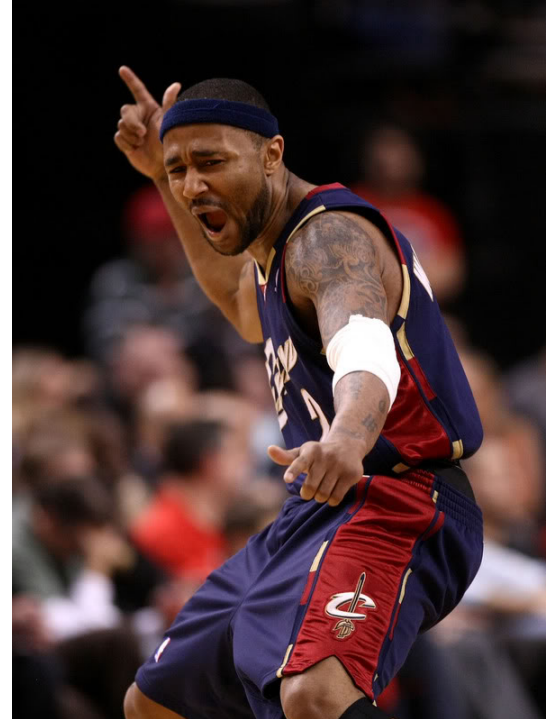


## Please, Don't Snub Mo

Written by {ga=samamico}  
Monday, January 26 2009 7:00 PM -

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A long time contributor here on the site, we're fired up to see our guy Sam Amico co-hosting the "Wine & Gold Zone" on STO. Few know the NBA better than Sam, and he's an all around good guy and a great writer. In his latest, Sam very effectively makes the case for Mo Williams as an All-Star reserve, noting all the contributions that Mo makes that don't show up in the box score, but do factor into the W-L column. Sam also uses the opportunity to list who he would choose as the seven reserves in each conference if the decision was his.



When it comes to the NBA All-Star Game, Cavaliers point guard Mo Williams is in. At least, he absolutely, positively should be.

There's been no official announcement (not until later this week), no inside sources revealing that Williams will be a reserve for the Eastern Conference. I'm just going by what I've seen from Williams -- and the other players with whom he is supposedly battling for a roster spot.

First, let's start with this little tidbit: Being named an All-Star doesn't really matter to anyone but the guys who may not be All-Stars. In other words, LeBron James doesn't care. He KNOWS he's an All-Star. But for guys like Williams, guys who have never played on the NBA's biggest stage (other than the Finals), guys who are wondering exactly how much their games are appreciated ... well, being an All-Star really means something to those guys.

Again, Williams is one of those guys. He's a man of the brink of All-Stardom.

There are a lot of those types in the league, particularly in the East. New Jersey's Devin Harris got off to a marvelous start. Orlando's Jameer Nelson is making a strong case to win the Most Improved Player award. Indiana's Danny Granger is another one who should be a shoe-in for the roster, but has no guarantees.

Of all those players, Williams deserves the most consideration.

For one, the Cavs have the best record, percentage-wise, in the conference (34-8). So they

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deserve having more than just James (who was voted in by fans) named to the team.

Second, there's a reason the Cavs often look like the East's best team, not to mention the only team in the entire league that has yet to lose a home game (20-0). Obviously, none of it would be possible without LeBron. But none of it would be possible with Williams, either.

Hopefully, coaches who choose the reserves are smart enough to see that. I'm guessing they are.

Williams has been huge down the clutch for the Cavs, hitting important shots in the final moments of road wins against both Golden State and Utah. In fact, if Williams hadn't hit a late three-pointer in the corner against the Warriors, there would be no talk of James' game-winner at the buzzer. It never would have happened.

Williams also has turned into a second-half player, often finding his rhythm when it means the most -- even if he struggles early. He gets along well with teammates and never gets testy when things don't go his way. He's hitting 93.5 percent from the free-throw line -- an important stat for a point guard who likes to penetrate and occasionally gets knocked to the floor. They want to knock you down? Fine. Just hit 'em back at the line.

And the man who is now being called "The Hit Man" by the Cleveland media deserves the nod over guys like Harris and Nelson because he's been doing it ALL SEASON. And the Cavs are winning -- a lot. Besides, you can't really make a case for Nelson as his team's second-best player. (That honor goes to either Rashard Lewis or Hedo Turkoglu, one of whom is likely to make the All-Star trip over Nelson.)

Meanwhile, Williams has been the Cavs' second-best player on a consistent basis. That's mostly why he deserves to be in the showcase game. If not, being an All-Star really doesn't mean much -- because the players who deserve it most are getting overlooked for all the wrong reasons.

### **ALL-STAR SUBS**

My picks for All-Star Game reserves:

#### **East**

Mo Williams, G, Cavs  
Paul Pierce, F, Celtics  
Ray Allen, G, Celtics  
Rashard Lewis, F, Magic  
Danny Granger, F, Pacers  
Chris Bosh, F/C, Raptors  
Joe Johnson, G, Hawks.

#### **West**

Brandon Roy, G, Trail Blazers

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Amare Stoudemire, F/C, Suns  
Dirk Nowitzki, F, Mavericks  
Chauncey Billups, G, Nuggets  
#Carmelo Anthony, F, Nuggets  
Tony Parker, G, Spurs  
Pau Gasol, F, Lakers

# - Anthony is injured and won't play. I would replace him with either Lakers center Andrew Bynum or Blazers forward LaMarcus Aldridge.

*Sam Amico is the editor of ProBasketballNews.com, analyst for the "Wine & Gold Zone" show Monday nights on SportsTime Ohio, and a regular contributor to TheClevelandFan.com. He can be reached at [amico@probasketballnews.com](mailto:amico@probasketballnews.com).*