

The king is dead. Long live the king. That's what comes to mind after watching the Cavs hit the afterburners in the 4th quarter of their game against Detroit in The Palace of Auburn Hills on Sunday. The Cavs kept Detroit in their sights for three quarters and then watched Mo Williams and Daniel Gibson get hot enough to overcome an 8 point Pistons lead in the 4th quarter of a 90-80 win. Brian McPeck takes a look back at the Cavs' Super Bowl Sunday win over the fading Pistons.



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That Gibson, Williams and the Cavs did their 4<sup>th</sup> quarter damage while LeBron James was resting to begin the 4<sup>th</sup>

quarter speaks long and hard to the depth of this Cavaliers squad. It also opens up a 12 game cushion separating the Cavs from the Pistons in the Eastern Conference's Central Division.

The Pistons once were king.

Now they're just another team. And a struggling, old one at that. Feel free to buy your Central Division Championship gear at this time. You'll probably need a bigger sized shirt or sweatshirt since you last ordered such gear. It's been 33 years after all.

James checked back into the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter action in time to score 8 points in the quarter on his way to a 33-point and 8 assist day. William chipped in 22 points and hauled down 7 boards to support.

Detroit got 22 points from Allen Iverson and 16 from Richard Hamilton.

## Takeaways

- This wasn't a game you'll turn into a portrait and hang on a wall. These two teams rarely play an aesthetically pleasing contest. But to Cavs fans it was still a thing of beauty because of what it represents. For years there was a sense of dread and doom when the Pistons were considered. Regardless of regular season success or early round playoff conquests the Pistons always seemed to be looming. But without Chauncey Billups and with the mercurial Allen Iverson 'leading' the way, The Pistons are all bark with very little bite. Not only did they trade Billups for AI but they seem to be aging in dog years. Rip Hamilton, while still dangerous, no longer seems to be sure death curling off screens. Rasheed Wallace is no longer an a-hole who consistently kills you. He's just an a-hole. And throw in an inexperienced coach who seems powerless to do anything other than watch the inmates run the asylum and the 12 games separating Cleveland and Detroit in the standings is no surprise.

It's never pretty watching the Prom Queen get old and ugly. Unless the Prom Queen is Deeeetroit baskeettbaaaaaalllll. Then it's more than just a little bit enjoyable.

- Sometimes the stat sheet is a flat out lying dog. One could look at the box score from this one and somehow make the determination that Anderson Varejao didn't have much of an impact. The big Brazilian took just one shot in 23 minutes of play and scored but two points on the day.

But a closer look at the game would tell a completely different story. Varejao played what may have been his most active, efficient and productive game of the season on Sunday afternoon in Detroit.

Not only did AV grab six rebounds but he kept multiple offensive possessions alive with three offensive boards and multiple back taps. He was also a human screen setting machine all day, especially in the critical 4<sup>th</sup> quarter. It's always nice to see Varejao scoring on back cuts and off the pick and roll but the work he did Sunday without the basketball in his hands was as unselfish and productive as it was crucial in determining the outcome of the ballgame.

- Good to see the big man back in the lineup and helping to space the floor. Zydrunas Ilgauskas scored 13 points and grabbed 8 boards on Sunday.

He didn't shoot especially well (5/16 on the day) but he shot well enough to at least drag one of Detroit's big men away from the basket and opened up the floor in doing so.

That's a huge component to the Cavs offense. Creating seams that Mo Williams, LBJ and others can get into was a component that was lacking when Z was down with an injury. It's even more critical when playing a team with some size and the Lakers and Orlando will likely see a completely different Cavalier offense when they come to Cleveland.

## **They Got Next**

It's Toronto on Tuesday night (7:00 PM) at 'The Q', a quick trip to New York on Wednesday night (7:30 PM) and then the Lakers make their

lone appearance of the season in Cleveland next Sunday (3:30 PM on ABC). The Lakers will be missing Andrew Bynum who injured a knee the other night and I likely out for a few weeks. Turnabout is fair play. Let's see how the Lakers respond next Sunday when the Cavs have Z and the Lakers are missing Bynum.