

Cavaliers Stand Pat At Deadline

Written by {ga=samamico}

Wednesday, February 18 2009 7:00 PM -

Ladies and gentlemen, meet your post-trade deadline Cavaliers! You should recognize them -- because they look exactly like the pre-deadline Cavaliers. No Shaquille O'Neal, no Antawn Jamison, no Vince Carter, no Marcus Camby, no Brad Miller, no Richard Jefferson. But the lack of any deal wasn't the result of a lack of effort from Cavs GM Danny Ferry. Amico has the scoop.



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You should recognize them -- because they look exactly like the pre-deadline Cavaliers. No Shaquille O'Neal, no Antawn Jamison, no Vince Carter, no Marcus Camby, no Brad Miller.

There's no Richard Jefferson, either, and I never understood that rumor to begin with. I mean, if the Cavs need anything, it's certainly not someone who plays the same position as LeBron James.

But the lack of a deal wasn't the result of a lack of effort from Cavs GM Danny Ferry. He really DID try to acquire the Suns' Big Diesel, offering forward Ben Wallace and guard Sasha Pavlovic.

Now, stay with me, because here is where it really gets weird:

The Suns said they didn't WANT Wallace. They would deal Shaq to the Cavs, but only if the Cavs replaced Wallace with Wally Szczerbiak.

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Think about that for a second. The Suns wanted Szczzerbiak and Pavlovic for a 7-foot-1, 325-pound (at least) center who has won four championships and is destined for the Hall of Fame.

Think about it again.

Szczzerbiak and Pavlovic for Shaq.

And the Cavs said no way, Jose.

But guess what? As crazy as it sounds, it makes sense. Gone are the days when NBA teams traded talent for talent. Instead, it's talent for an expiring contract, which is what the Suns really wanted and what Szczzerbiak owns.

Taking a deeper look, Szczzerbiak is in the final year of a deal that pays him \$13.8 million this season. Wallace, on the other hand, is still owed \$14 million next season. So the Suns didn't want to be saddled with Wallace's contract. They wanted a contract that comes off the books and keeps them under the NBA's salary cap at the end of the year. Just like Szczzerbiak's.

It sounds complicated and crazy, and to some degree, it is. But just know the reason the Cavs didn't land O'Neal was cash. Like it or not, in today's NBA that's just the way that it goes.

NO NEED TO PANIC

A few more things to consider when it comes to the Cavs:

* First, they are 41-11, people. Calm down. And I don't want to hear that they can't get past Boston or the L.A. Lakers without another big man. The Cavs have yet to play L.A. with all their

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weapons (Delonte West missed both games), and these Lakers haven't proven they can play the type of defense needed to win a title.

* Yes, Shaq would've been great in a Cavs uniform. Same goes for Jamison, and to a lesser degree, Camby. But Camby was never really available, as the Clippers still want to see what might happen when all their veteran talent finally gets healthy. (My guess is nothing special will result, but hey, that's the Clippers' problem). No matter, the Cavs are still a very, very good team -- and one that can beat Boston as is.

* Now for the somewhat depressing news. There have been reports that former Cavs forward Joe Smith -- traded to Oklahoma City as part of the deal for Mo Williams -- will be waived by the Thunder. He was traded earlier in the week to New Orleans for Tyson Chandler, but that deal was rescinded after Chandler failed a physical. So the Thunder is likely to just cut Smith loose. What's so bad about that? Well, he supposedly wants to sign with the Celtics after being waived, rejoining former Minnesota teammate and good buddy Kevin Garnett.

* So what's the bottom line on the post-deadline Cavs? They are a team that tried to make a move to put themselves over the top, but didn't want to mortgage the franchise to get it done. And truth is, they are real contenders as they stand today.

Sam Amico is the co-host of the "Wine & Gold Zone" Monday nights on SportsTime Ohio, the editor of ProBasketballNews.com, and a frequent contributor to TheClevelandFan. He can be reached at amico@probasketballnews.com.