

## Close Shave In The Clip Joint

Written by {ga=hermanfontenot}  
Tuesday, March 10 2009 7:00 PM -

---

So, how many of you- those of you up on a school night, that is- thought the Cavaliers were going to lose to the Los Angeles Clippers on Tuesday night? You could hardly be blamed if you did. For three quarters and change, the Cavaliers played possibly their worst game of the season. They fell behind the Clip Show early and offered token resistance as L.A.'s bedraggled junior varsity built up a double-digit lead and kept it. But the Cavs fought back on the wee hours of the morning to steal this one, 87-83, and are now tied with the L.A. Varsity for best record in the NBA.



So, how many of you- those of you up on a school night, that is- thought the Cavaliers were going to lose to the Los Angeles Clippers on Tuesday night?

You could hardly be blamed if you did. For three quarters and change, the Cavaliers played possibly their worst game of the season. They fell behind the Clip Show early and offered token resistance as L.A.'s bedraggled junior varsity built up a double-digit lead and kept it. Shots weren't falling. The backcourt didn't show. The bench didn't show. The girl didn't show. *Nobody showed.*

And if you switched this bad boy off sometime around the start of the fourth quarter, bleary-eyed in your concession, hey- not all of you can stay up limitless hours. But you missed an interesting finish. You probably know it already as you

## Close Shave In The Clip Joint

Written by {ga=hermanfontenot}  
Tuesday, March 10 2009 7:00 PM -

---

hammer your coffee (or whatever you drink that's caffeine-rich in the A.M.) but the Cavaliers won this game. They came from 19 down in the fourth quarter to defeat the Clippers, 87-83. They're 50-13, tied with the L.A. Varsity for best record in the whole damned Association.

You can trust this team. You can also trust the Los Angeles Clippers.

**Dry backcourt:** The usually reliable tandem of Mo Williams and Delonte West struggled mightily, shooting a combined 5-for-23. Mo couldn't get into the lane for his trademark floaters and fadeaways. For the most part he was a stationary shooter, and the shots weren't falling. Delonte, well... maybe he was out late in L.A. on Monday. Two points, two assists, one rebound, 2-of-8 from the field, no free throws, and a -11. The man had a bad night.

There was a point this in game in which LeBron just gave up on his guards. He had Mo and Delonte open but chose to get to the basket and take the shots in traffic or find cutting big men close to the hoop. He turned his guards into spectators, which wasn't the wrong decision at the time. So they stood around cold, missed the occasional jumper, and didn't create.

**Hate to keep stressing this point, but:** At the present, there is a conflux between Yours Truly hunting and pecking out these recaps and LeBron James going for triple-doubles. That's four out of five now on the season- not counting the discounted Triple-D in Madison Square- as the phenomenon from St. Vincent-St. Mary went for 32 points, 13 rebounds, 11 assists, and two blocks on 10-of-23 shooting and 12-of-16 from the line. He was unrelenting, aggressive, and willed his team along until it was ready to help him bring the game home. He was every bit the superstar.

He also went 0-of-6 from three-point range. Which segues nicely into...

## Close Shave In The Clip Joint

Written by {ga=hermanfontenot}  
Tuesday, March 10 2009 7:00 PM -

---

**It just... wouldn't... fall:** The Cavaliers entered the night at the top of the NBA in three-point accuracy at 39.3 percent. They shot 3-of-20 in Staples Center Tuesday night and didn't make their first three-pointer until the 5:01 mark of the fourth quarter, after sixteen consecutive misses. A lot of those misses were hasty heaves launched early in the shot clock, on the heels of offensive rebounds- the shots of a team looking for an easy way out.

**It fell at the right time, though:** Cleveland bottomed out three of its last four three-point attempts.

**Burn This Stat:** The Cavaliers trailed for forty minutes and seven seconds of this game. They fell behind 12-11 with 6:31 left in the first quarter, and didn't lead again until there was 1:24 left in the fourth.

**Burn This Stat II:** The Cavaliers trailed by double-digits for 21:57 consecutive minutes, from the 6:01 mark of the second quarter until the 8:04 mark of the fourth quarter.

**It wasn't the defense:** the Clip Show shot 39 percent and went 3-of-17 from three-point range. They never really got hot; it was Cleveland's utter lack of offensive production that kept L.A. out in front.

**No, he couldn't have helped:** L.A. couldn't throw a beach ball into the Pacific from a sandbar, yet Mike Dunleavy didn't think to employ Steve Novak to knock down some long ones. The sharp-shooting ex-Marquette teammate of Dwayne Wade hit 5-of-10 three-pointers against the Cavaliers in January, yet played six minutes on Tuesday.

**It was the offense:** The Cavaliers saw L.A.'s 39 percent shooting, along with the aforementioned three-point troubles.

## Close Shave In The Clip Joint

Written by {ga=hermanfontenot}  
Tuesday, March 10 2009 7:00 PM -

---

**Play of the Night I:** With 10:57 to go in the fourth quarter, Marcus Camby knocked in a sidewinder jumper to make it 73-54 in favor of the Clip Show.

**Fourth-Quarter Action:** Cleveland outscored the Clip Show 33-10 in the final 10:57 and came from double-digits down in the fourth for the second time in three road games.

**Home court, huh?** Almost the entire night the Staples Center crowd sat quietly through a game that would've had fans in Golden State and Portland fans lighting off firecrackers in the building. It was as if they were waiting for the other shoe to drop, as of course it did.

**Can they at least move to Anaheim?** The Lake Show annually has two "road games" in their own building against the sorriest franchise in the NBA. You can see their retired numbers through the gloom in which the Staples Center is enshrouded when the Clippers are at "home." It's BS, really.

**Not to second-guess:** But the Braves should have never left Buffalo.

**I have to admit:** I couldn't conceive of the Cavaliers losing this game. I just couldn't. They were going to make a run- eventually, some shots were going to drop, the defense would get some stops, and the Clippers were going to be compliant enough to stay within shouting range. Cleveland was going to be Cleveland, and the Clip Show was going to be the Clip Show. It was just a question of if the run was going to be substantial enough, and if there was enough time.

You have to believe this team can pull out a game against the likes of the Clip Show, even one so seemingly lost as this one, before you believe it can win an NBA Championship. I believe this team can win it all, therefore I believe it can pull

## Close Shave In The Clip Joint

Written by {ga=hermanfontenot}  
Tuesday, March 10 2009 7:00 PM -

---

a game out of the crack of its butt against a bottom-feeder. That seems to be the baseline, no?

I mean, did you believe the 1995 Indians could come back on the Royals and Orioles? Of course you did.

**Play of the Night II:** The Cavaliers had gone on an 8-0 run after Camby's basket, but they hadn't cut the L.A. lead to single-digits, and needed to get over that hump. LeBron swooped through the middle of the lane and, with 8:04 left, dropped his Magic-style hook to make it 73-64 and start the comeback in earnest.

**Play of the Night III:** Mo Williams missed his first six three-point attempts. The first one he- and the team- made from long distance cut Cleveland's deficit to seven, at 76-69, with 5:01 left. Good time to break that cherry. LeBron also sealed his second consecutive triple-double with the assist.

**Play of the Night IV:** The team's second three-pointer was even timelier. With 1:50 to play, Mo found Daniel Gibson, and the much-maligned shooter found bottom from long range to tie the game at 80-apiece and finally put the Cavaliers in a position to settle the thing on their own terms.

**Trust the Clip Show to be the Clip Show, Part I:** The Sons of Sterling committed seven turnovers in the game's first 33:11. But in the last 14:49, they committed eight miscues, including five in the last four-and-a-half minutes. The Clip Show missed 13 of their last 15 shots from the field, made a total of three shots in the fourth quarter, and hit one field goal in more than ten minutes of play as Cleveland turned a 73-54 deficit into an 82-80 lead.

**Not a good day to be a MAC guy:** Chris Kaman played his first game since November 26, and he struggled. The ex-Central Michigan star shot 3-of-11 and committed four turnovers, including several crucial miscues as the Cavaliers made

## Close Shave In The Clip Joint

Written by {ga=hermanfontenot}  
Tuesday, March 10 2009 7:00 PM -

---

their late run. Wally Szczerbiak was mask-free (much to his delight, I'm sure) but was otherwise innocuous with four points and a rebound. Why Kaman was out there in crunch time I have no idea. Bill Simmons loves to rag on Mike Dunleavy; I don't think much of him as a coach either, but the Clippers have a way of turning people into idiots, unless their names are Larry Brown and Ron Harper.

**Play of the Night V:** A pair of free throws from LBJ had given the Cavaliers that 82-80 lead, but with 29.4 left Al Thornton, who had a nice night, drilled a three-pointer from the top of the key to give L.A. the lead back, 83-82. It would have been a shame to come from 19 down and lose. Mo Williams, owner of a miserable night for the most part, made sure the effort wasn't wasted. A nice series of passes left Mo open from three-point range, and with 6.6 left, the Alabama sharpshooter (or the Mississippi marksman) shrugged off a night of clanks and delivered cotton to give the Cavaliers the lead for good, 85-83.

You can't ask a player to *make* the big shot. You can only ask him to *take* it. Mo had a rough evening, but when he had the shot, he took it without hesitation. This guy is going to be money in the Playoffs. He won't disappoint.

**Trust the Clip Show to be the Clip Show, Part II:** L.A. had one last chance to pull the game out of the fire and move to a lusty 16-48 on the season. But with plenty of time remaining to set up a play, Zach Randolph launched a thirty-footer that didn't even graze the rim. The ball bounced harmlessly out of bounds and back to the Cavaliers, and the game was over.

**Bronze this stat:** The Cavaliers have reached the fifty-win plateau for the sixth time in franchise history.

**High-Water Mark:** Cleveland is now a game-and-a-half ahead of Boston in the race for the top seed in the East, which I'd wager is their biggest margin of the season so far. And the depleted C's have to deal with Dwayne Wade tomorrow night.

## Close Shave In The Clip Joint

Written by {ga=hermanfontenot}  
Tuesday, March 10 2009 7:00 PM -

---

**And lest we forget:** Happy 61<sup>st</sup>, Uncle Austin!

**Next:** Thursday night at 10:30 in Phoenix, against the setting Suns.