

All Brian McPeck can do is yawn. Not necessarily because the Cavs 119-111 win over the Phoenix Suns Thursday night didn't end until after 1am local time, but because it was just another routine triple-double performance by LeBron James that led them. Throw in his game altering block of Jason Richardson's breakaway dunk attempt and you have a pretty clear cut way to go about ending a decade long losing streak in Phoenix. The Cavs are now 51-13 and have a 2.5 game lead over the Celtics for the #1 seed in the Eastern Conference.



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James scored 34 points, grabbed 10 rebounds, dished out 13 assists and, just for kicks and giggles, threw in three steals and three blocks on the night. The assists came freely in the first half when LBJ repeatedly hit Mo Williams for open looks. Williams capitalized by scoring 19 in the first half on his way to a very complementary 30 point, 5 rebound night.

Batman and Robin got help from Zydrunas Ilgauskas and Sasha Pavlovic too. Z scored 15 points and Sasha (yes Sasha) was 6/9 from the floor and 3/5 from 3-point range for 16 points.

Matt Barnes (things are getting tough in Phoenix) led the Suns with 21 points while Steve Nash added 20 and Grant Hill chipped in 15.

Takeaways

- West coast swings are tough on the body. Not the players, although that's the case. I'm speaking more about mine. There's not enough coffee in the pot for a day after the TNT second game of a doubleheader. Seriously, they wait until every second is wrung out of the Lakers-Spurs game that was played earlier before starting the Cavs-Suns tilt. Throw in the ridiculous 'Hug & Kiss-a-thon' before every opening tip and you're looking at a 1030pm scheduled start going off at damn 11pm. I'm looking through swollen slits where my eyes used to be.

- It could be worse. I could be writing for the PhoenixFan.com. It's never enjoyable to watch someone die day-by-day. But that's what the poor people in Phoenix are witnessing when they head to the US Airways Center to watch the Suns. Some of the Suns sons are probably draft eligible next season. Guys like Shaq and Nash and Hill are a couple years away from dominating some Scottsdale YMCA league but it's not paying too well in the Western Conference. Phoenix, while still dangerous because of their style and the fact occasionally old men are productive, is going to likely be on the outside looking in when the playoffs start. And Steve Kerr would be wise to use his second and last chance at this job on a rapid fire rebuild to infuse the team with some talent that's not eligible for discounted dinners on Weekdays before 5pm.

- Now that I've hit the important things like my capacity to stay up late and the 'Golden Girls' approach to building a team in Phoenix, time to give it up for Sasha Pavlovic. This happens a couple times a year and, to be truthful, is probably what has kept him on this roster for the past couple seasons.

Pavlovic's 16 points and big night from long distance was the difference in the game on Thursday night. He also grabbed a couple rebounds and handed out a couple assists in 28 minutes of play. What's the significance? Well, Daniel Gibson got 10 minutes of run and missed the only two shots he took during his time on the floor. Boobie's struggles have opened the door for Sasha to firmly establish himself in the rotation. And if Pavlovic plays like he has for most of the season (those nights when he hasn't been hurt) he's earned Boobie's minutes. Boobie may have pissed his playing time away but he'd likely still be getting that run if Pavlovic wasn't providing what he's providing.

Sasha has long been a tease. Pavlovic is tremendously athletic, a streaky and sometimes effective long distance shooter who can also get to the rim as well a pretty good defender when he's so inclined to give the effort. Maybe the light went on. If Sasha is ready to be Sasha Pavlovic and not aspiring to be LeBron Pavlovic he could be very useful down the stretch and hopefully into June.

They Got Next

The 51-13 Cavaliers get the 14-50 Sacramento Kings tonight at 10pm in Arco Arena. It'd be a nice gift if they could run out to a 50 point halftime lead so we can all get some sleep. But, it is Friday the 13th and we did see what the Clippers nearly accomplished a couple nights back. I'll take the lack of sleep for a 3 game western sweep.

The boys come back to town Sunday to face the Knicks at 6pm in 'The Q' and have a lot of home cooking to look forward to over the next couple weeks. Time to make some hay in the Eastern Conference race.