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Mo Williams picked up the scoring mantle from LeBron James on Sunday and poured in 23 points on 8/13 shooting while also grabbing 7 rebounds. James made his presence felt despite an off night scoring the basketball. LBJ still chipped in 19 points and also had a game-high 10 assists while collecting 8 boards.

The Cavs needed some help on Sunday night from the bench and they got it from Joe Smith. In his best game since rejoining the Cavs 10 days ago Smith had 10 points and 7 rebounds. Sasha Pavlovic scored only seven points but all of them were critical, including five points down the stretch on a 3-pointer and a put back off a miss while New York was still in the ballgame and looking for the upset.

The Knicks were led by Al Harrington and Nate Robinson who scored 26 and 20 points respectively. David Lee also contributed 10 points and 14 rebounds in a losing effort.

### **Takeaways**

- This Cavaliers squad is a tired basketball team. Physically and emotionally you can see the grind of the recent two weeks taking a toll on the Cavs. You could see it on the west coast trip last week and you could see it on the defensive end Sunday against New York. The rotations were just a bit slower and the help was lacking at times. The Knicks, despite their deficiencies and lack of talent, are a team that will take advantage of tired team. They love to up the tempo and shoot threes all night long. They miss a hell of a lot of those threes but they were active on the offensive boards Sunday night and got numerous second and third chance points.

The Knicks had 46 rebounds on the night and 17 of them (36%) were on the offensive end. Thankfully the Knicks also gave up 13 offensive rebounds to the Cavs and Joe Smith and Pavlovic took advantage of a couple of New York Box out issues for big put backs.

- Given the fatigue issues and the style of play of their opponents, I

was still pleased with the defensive effort the Cavs put forth. When all is said and done they gave up just 93 points to a team that's comfortable playing in the hundreds and beyond.

- Terrific balance on the offensive end Sunday evening. With Williams going for 23 and James scoring a pedestrian 19 the scoring had to come from other sources against New York. Delonte West scored 13 points, Zydrunas Ilgauskas added 12 (and eight rebounds) and Anderson Varejao was (again) all over the court scoring 8 points and picking off 9 rebounds.

This club is getting it done nearly every night through different methods. In years past, if LBJ scored just 19 points the Cavs lose by 15-20 points regardless of who they play.

- Not that anyone around here is paying attention to such things, but the Celtics on Sunday were bounced around by the Milwaukee Bucks 86-77. That means the Cavaliers are 3 ½ games up on Boston and four games up on Orlando for that critical #1 seed in the Eastern Conference.

## **They Got Next**

It doesn't get the least bit easier for Mike Brown's troops in the next week. Four more games on tap, all of them difficult for a variety of reasons.

Tuesday night it's Dwight Howard and the dangerous and talented Orlando Magic visiting 'The Q' in a 7pm tip. After that the Portland Trailblazers come to town for a Thursday night match up in Cleveland. The Cavs then welcome the Atlanta

Hawks, an athletic group that gives the Cavs some issues, to Cleveland on Saturday afternoon (1pm) and then immediately fly out to face the Nets in New Jersey Sunday evening (6pm).

That's another crucible to walk through. The good news is that three of the four games are here on a court where the Cavs are 29-1. The bad news is they could use a breather of more than a day or so to rejuvenate themselves.