

If there were Disney dwarves named Sucky, Sloppy and Crappy we could have mixed them into the headline after watching Friday night's Cavaliers-Magic game in Orlando. The Magic stepped on the accelerator early on and the Cavs were left sucking exhaust for most of the 116-87 Orlando victory. And the final score wasn't nearly indicative of the ferocity of beat down Dwight Howard, Rashard Lewis and company put on the Cavaliers. Not a pretty one tonight kiddies. Brian McPeek tells us about it.



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Once again LeBron James paced the Cavaliers by scoring 26 points in three quarters of play. Trailing by 32 points to start the fourth quarter there was really no reason for LBJ to see the court in the final 12 minutes of play. Hell, when they were trailing by 41 points with five minutes to play in the third quarter it would have been nice to see LBJ and the rest of the starters grabbing a towel and

calling it a night.

Mo Williams and Zydrunas Ilgauskas chipped in 10 points each for the Cavs while no one else on the roster threatened the double figure mark on the night.

On the other hand, seven Magic players hit the double digit mark, led by Rashard Lewis's 22 points and Dwight Howard's 20 points and 11 rebounds.

Takeaways

- If we're talking takeaways we should start by noting the Cavaliers aren't getting nearly enough of them right now. Following up a night in Washington where the Cavs got no steals they had just four Friday night against the Magic. That's indicative of the fact that the Cavaliers have played their two worst defensive games of the season in the last 24 hours.

Cleveland has given up 225 points in that 24 hour period, an average of 112 per night. Compare that to their season average of 90 points allowed per game and you can easily understand why the Cavaliers 13-game win streak was ended and they're currently looking at a 2 game losing streak with San Antonio looming on Sunday afternoon.

The Cavs need to get their groove back real quick before they cough up all of that 3 game lead they had just days ago over the Lakers for home court advantage throughout the playoffs. They'll have to get their focus back first. They've been beaten mercilessly in the paint and in transition by the Wizards and the Magic in the last two nights.

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No one can argue about the tremendous job Mike Brown has done this season with this Cavaliers team. 61-15 speaks loudly for itself and Brown has successfully blended together some dynamic players and assorted talents into a cohesive unit that has put together a thus far amazing regular season.

But like his star player, Mike Brown is not infallible and he's subject to criticism. Trailing by 41 points in the third quarter on Friday night it was simply inexcusable to see LBJ, Williams, Ilgauskas and Delonte West on the court. Best case scenario, that group puts together a mini-run of 11-0 or something in that neighborhood, and cuts the lead to 30 points entering the fourth quarter.

What good would that have done?

At that point in the game guys named Kinsey, Jackson, Pavlovic, Gibson and Hickson should have been running the offense and earning their keep. It should have been that group running the risk of coming down awkwardly on someone's foot and rolling an ankle in a blowout. I'm not in favor of altering the normal rotation down the stretch. Home court is too important to mess with the players and their minutes that way. Rather, I'd prefer Brown be smart with the minutes of the guys who have carried the mail thus far and will be doing the heavy lifting in the playoffs. He had that chance with half of the third quarter remaining and decided to leave his starters out there for minutes they didn't need to accrue.

To take it a step further, it would have sent a very loud and very clear message to the entire team had Brown subbed in 5 new players for his starters at the 6 minute mark of the quarter. Their effort and intensity

the last two nights has been sub par to say the least. Brown had a chance to make a statement and get his starters out of harm's way and, like his team, he came up short Friday night.

- Save your bitching, whining and crying about the Cavaliers record against the so-called Big Three of Orlando, Los Angeles and Boston for someone who cares. I'm not on that train. As mentioned above, 61-15 speaks for itself and I'll take this Cavaliers squad in a seven game series over any of those clubs if they're playing well. That's done with the proviso that the Cavs own that all important home court advantage.

And that they're actually playing well.

They've sucked rocks the last two games but let's have some perspective. They've had one really bad day and it just so happened that had to play two games, on the road no less, in that period of time. They have a day on the practice floor to get the suck out of their system and reassert themselves as one of the league's elite on Sunday against the Spurs. They need to answer the challenge.

They Got Next

Tim Duncan, Manu Ginobili and Tony Parker visit 'The Q' for a 1pm tip on ABC this Sunday. The Cavs will then get a couple days off before facing those Wizards again at 'The Q' on

Wednesday night (7pm, FSN Ohio) and they'll hit the road again for a Friday tip in Philadelphia (7pm, FSN Ohio) to wrap up the week.