

Cavs Drop Season Finale In OT; Prepare For Playoffs

Written by {ga=hermanfontenot}
Wednesday, April 15 2009 7:00 PM -

The Cavaliers didn't have their stars in action in the season finale Wednesday night at the Q against the 76ers. In the second half, they were down to a skeleton crew. Ultimately, the shortage of manpower- and a shortage of calls- were costly in a 111-110 overtime loss that sent a-glimmer their hopes of tying the 40-1 home-court record set by the 1985-86 Celtics. It was a spirited effort, but it wasn't quite enough. Guess we'll have to settle for 39-2. And 66-16. And home-court throughout the Playoffs. Not bad consolation prizes.



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D-Jax: The Cavaliers had it their way in the first twenty-four minutes, bolting to a 49-37 halftime lead, and much of that was due to Darnell Jackson, the second-round rookie. The former Kansas Jayhawk led the team in scoring for the half with eleven points on 5-of-5 shooting from the field, including a couple of jump shots and a bullish three-point play, in which he took a bump, changed direction, and flipped it in with the right hand. For the game, D-Jax finished with 15 points- more than doubling his previous high of seven- and eight rebounds on 6-of-10 shooting. He isn't the most athletically gifted man in the world, doesn't have the highest ceiling, but Darnell understands his position and understands how to play the game- steady and rock-solid.

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Boobie's Back: His renaissance has been going on for quite some time now, but Daniel Gibson really hit his stride on Wednesday night. He was the go-to guy down the stretch, and hit the three-pointer with .6 left in regulation that tied the game at 98-98 and sent it to overtime. The Texas gunslinger finished the night with 28 points, his highest mark since his legendary Game Six performance against Detroit in the '07 Playoffs. Granted, he was also flambœed on defense- a big reason he finished with a team-low -8 despite leading the Cavaliers in scoring. He spent much of the second half on Andre Miller, and the match-up simply didn't work. But he shot the ball well and under pressure.

Burn This Stat: Philadelphia shot 43 free-throws to Cleveland's 12. I don't know how that happened, especially in the Q. I thought the 76ers got away with a lot of contact down low and 59-year old Theo Ratliff *definitely* got away with a goal-tend on a scoop shot by Daniel Gibson that would have given the Cavaliers the lead in the closing seconds of regulation.

It isn't exactly the Doc and Bobby Jones down there these days: Man, Philadelphia is bad. They went up against the Cavaliers' junior-varsity on Wednesday night, and if it wasn't for Delonte West and Anderson Varejao being pulled at halftime, along with that ridiculous free-throw disparity, they would have lost this game going away. Thanks to Chicago's loss to Toronto, the 76ers are the sixth seed and will play Orlando. I doubt the match-up is causing much consternation in Central Florida.

Jawad some? Cleveland native and St. Edwards graduate Jawad Williams got some burn tonight and scored eight points, including a couple of corner three-balls that kept Cleveland in front of the charging 76ers in the second half.

Just like when him and Damon Frierson ruled the MAC: Wally Sczcerbiak needed to find his shot to carry the shorthanded Cavaliers on Wednesday night, and if there's a guy you don't need to tell twice to shoot, that's Wally. The former Miami Redhawk poured in 21 on 8-of-11 shooting, and provided the Cavaliers bench with a moment of fourth-quarter hilarity when he drove an uncontested lane

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and hammered it with all the force his rec-league body could muster. Judging by the reaction of the bench whenever he throws it down (or throws a shot), Wally seems to be to this team what Jim Carrey was to "In Living Color"-pasty comic relief. That's no disrespect to the solid veteran scorer.

Again: 43 to 12 at the free-throw line? Seriously?

That won't get you a militia back home, buddy: Sasha Pavlovic put up good numbers- 20 points on 9-of-18 shooting- but he didn't exactly cover himself with glory during an awkward second half that saw him air-ball a free throw, among other foibles.

Random Stat: The Cavaliers are the third team in NBA history to finish a season with a 66-16 record. The previous two- the 1970-71 Bucks and our old pals, the 2007-08 Celtics- won the NBA Championship.

Next: The Playoffs. Sixteen wins to go.