



LeBron, Varejao Save The Day After Late Bucks Run

In an exciting game with a wild finish, the Cavs staved off the Milwaukee Bucks 89-86 last night at The Q. The win secures the season series (3-1) with Milwaukee, and moved the Cavs three games ahead of them in the standings. As it stands right now, the Cavs and the Bucks would meet in the first round of the NBA Playoffs as the #4 vs. #5 match-up.

The Cavs held a slim lead throughout the majority of this game before extending it to a 85-77 count with just about four minutes remaining. Then the Bucks came charging back, reeling off a 9-0 run, capped by a T.J. Ford jumper, that gave Milwaukee a 86-85 lead with 30 seconds remaining.

After a time out, the Cavaliers cleared out for LeBron James. LeBron made a strong move, taking defender Bobby Simmons to the bucket, and converting a lay-in with 18 seconds left, giving the lead back to the Cavs at 87-86. On the ensuing possession, Redd tried to match LeBron, but Anderson Varejao was having none of it. Varejao made an incredible defensive play, staying in front of Redd, setting his feet, and drawing a charge with 11 seconds remaining. Varejao once again had a huge impact on the game, injecting energy into the team and crowd with his relentless hustle, aggressive defense, and ability to clean the glass.

LeBron then sealed the deal with a beautiful pass to Donyell Marshall with 8 seconds left as the Bucks tried to foul him. With two men draped all over him, James made an impossible pass to Marshall, who had streaked open under the

basket.

The Cavaliers played stellar defense throughout, and have been much improved on that end of the court over the past six weeks. They held the Bucks to 38% shooting, and even the shots Milwaukee made did not come easy. Coach Mike Brown kept alternating defenders on Michael Redd, using Eric Snow and LeBron James primarily, but even sent Varejao at him on a couple of occasions. Redd was just 6-17 from the floor, and 1-6 from three-point range.

The Cavaliers also took good care of the ball, assisting on 29 of their 37 buckets, and committing just five turnovers in the second half. The game got off to an incredibly ugly start, with both teams shooting well under 30% in the first quarter, which mercifully ended at a 15-15 stalemate.

Sasha Pavlovic and Drew Gooden both added 15 points for the Cavs, with Gooden neutralizing Bucks rookie Andrew Bogut at both ends of the floor. Bobby Simmons played a very solid game for Milwaukee sans the James driving layup late. He did a good job hounding LeBron all night, and finished with 21 points and 8 rebounds himself. James ended the night just shy of a triple double, finishing with 22 points, 9 rebounds, and 12 assists.

The win moves the Cavs to 27-19 on the season. They travel to Minnesota for a road tilt with Kevin Garnett and the Timberwolves on Wednesday.