

Growing Pains

Written by {ga=samamico}

Tuesday, October 27 2009 7:00 PM -

You wanted a win. You wanted it bad. But it didn't happen. And now you're panicked. But don't be. That's right, Sam Amico here to tell you not to even worry about the Cavaliers' 95-89 season-opening home loss to the dreaded Boston Celtics. And to expect some growing pains for a Cavaliers team that is missing Delonte West and is also in the process of integrating several new parts.



CLEVELAND - You wanted a win.

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But don't be.

That's right, I'm here to tell you not to even worry about the Cavaliers' 95-89 season-opening home loss to the dreaded Boston Celtics.

I'm here to tell you it's all gonna be OK. It may not seem like it today, but I promise -- the Cavs will be fine.

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For months, I've been telling anyone who would listen that it will take some time for the new-look Cavs to find themselves. I said you don't adjust to a guy like Shaquille O'Neal, a large man who plants himself on the low block in large way, and not experience a few growing pains.

You don't add veterans such as Anthony Parker and Jamario Moon and not have to adjust.

You don't lose a guy like Delonte West and not suffer a little.

You don't ask Zydrunas Ilgauskas to come off the bench and suddenly expect him to become Sixth Man of the Year.

It takes time, people. And it's OK. Really, it is.

Are the Cavs satisfied with the loss? Of course not. Could fans who also root for the Browns and Indians use a little something to feel good about?

Uh, no doubt about that, comrades.

Are there reasons to feel concerned about the way the Cavs blew a huge first-quarter lead against a title-contending team (stop me if you've read this before)?

Slightly concerned, yes. Overly terrified, no.

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Let's start with Shaq.

No, wait. Let's start with you.

How often have you taken a new job and mastered your assignments within the first two or three weeks? How often have you gotten a handle on things, and everything that's expected of you, right off the bat? How often have you fit seamlessly into your new role with your new co-workers, without a hitch?

Probably not often. You probably felt a little awkward at first.

And that is what Shaq and the Cavs are going through.

Now, you probably don't like the Celtics. You probably especially don't care for point guard Rajon Rondo. He seems a little cocky -- at least, he sure does when you're rooting against him.

But after the game, Rondo made more sense than anyone when it comes to the Cavaliers. He said something the Cavs and their fans needed to hear.

This is what Rondo said, and listen closely:

"You've got to understand that our core is basically the same. We've been playing together for three and a half years now. It's gonna take them some time."

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That's right, folks. Repeat after Rondo.

It's gonna take the Cavaliers some time.

You probably don't want to hear that. As a fan of Cleveland sports, it's probably the last thing you want to hear.

You are starving for winner, knowing that this team is supposed to be it. You know that this team is supposed to do so much more than just compete.

Heck, you probably want the Cavs to win every game by 50 points. And there might be some nights they will come close to that.

Just not yet.

As O'Neal said, "We just have to keep at it. You can't win a championship in the first game."

As James promised, "We'll be around."

As anyone who has been near a team that's replaced two starters and added some guys to the bench knows, the Cavs will certainly be better later than they are today.

That may not mean much right now, but how often do you think about games like the one last night? How often does the season-opener define a team?

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I would have to say not very often.

Consider the Orlando Magic. You remember the Magic, don't you? The team whose name you would rather spit than say?

Well, the Magic lost their season-opener last year -- to Atlanta. In Orlando.

Then they lost their first road game. In Memphis.

And just look at where the Magic finished the season. Still playing in June.

So go ahead. Be sad. But don't hang on to this one too long. Definitely don't listen to the national media, which is certainly crowning the Celtics as champs today.

And, please, don't freak out.

It's one game. One of 82. One that the Cavs have already put behind them. Very soon, you will too.

Sam Amico covers the Cavaliers and NBA for NBA.com, and is a frequent contributor to SportsTime Ohio and The Cleveland Fan.