

Cavs Dominate Suns 107-90

Written by {ga=samamico}

Wednesday, December 02 2009 7:00 PM -

Right now, the Cavaliers are starting to look like the team we hoped they were. They're starting to resemble a team that is gelling, a team that is everything it believed it would become. The latest example came Wednesday night, when the Cavs treated the poor Phoenix Suns to an all-out beating, coasting their way to a 107-90 victory. What's best about this win? Let us count the ways with Sam Amico.



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The latest example came Wednesday night, when the Cavs treated the poor Phoenix Suns to an all-out beating, coasting their way to a 107-90 victory.

What's best about this win? Let us count the ways:

* You can start with the fact that 10 guys played at least 12 minutes. Of those 10, seven reached double figures in scoring. None of those 10 scored more than 14 points -- but none scored less than eight. Confused? Just know that we're talking about some serious balance.

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* Or how about this: The guy who scored a team-high 14 points wasn't LeBron James. It was Zydrunas Ilgauskas. Yes, the same Ilgauskas who was at the center of a fairly controversial (and downright strange) decision by Mike Brown in the last game against Dallas -- in which Ilgauskas didn't even play. But he played this time, and played very well for that matter, setting the franchise record for total games (724) and proving that he should never be benched because of "matchups";

* Of course, James wasn't too shabby himself. It's true that he only scored 12 points, but he also kept the ball moving by passing for a game-high 10 assists. And remember, this game also involved Suns all-star guard and league-assist leader Steve Nash. Yet it was James who was the best distributor on a night that featured outstanding ball movement from the Cavs.

* James described the Cavs' unselfishness this way: "We executed and we shared the ball, and no matter who was open, they took the shot. If we do not have a great look, then we find a better one, and that's great to know that you have guys who are willing to give up their shot for a better look." Sounds simple, but the King speaks the truth. As fantastic as James is, the Cavs are even better when everyone gets involved.

* For once, the Cavs raced out to a huge first-quarter lead, and aside from a very minor lapse in the fourth, held onto it. Heck, they even built on it -- turning a 33-14 advantage into 59-29 right after halftime.

* The Cavs have now won 10 of 12. That includes five in a row at home. They are also 10-0 when they score at least 100 points (proving James' philosophy about ball movement), and interestingly, are the only Eastern Conference team that remains unbeaten against the West (5-0).

* Now, for the defense. As important as chemistry is on offense, it's equally important to play as a team at the other end (or perhaps even more important).

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The Cavs completely suffocated the league's highest scoring team in the first half, limiting the Suns to a measly 29 points in the opening 24 minutes. For the night, the Suns shot just 40 percent from the floor and were forced into 16 turnovers.

* As James said of the defense, "We just helped each other. We got out to their shooters and contested a lot of shots."

* The second part of that statement is absolute music to the ears of Cavs fans. The Cavs "got out to their shooters" and "contested a lot of shots." Think about that. Remember last year's playoff series against Orlando? When the Cavs couldn't "get out" to the Magic shooters? With guys like James, Jamarion Moon, Anthony Parker and a suddenly rejuvenated Delonte West, that shouldn't be a problem this year. Wednesday's game was living and breathing proof.

* OK, back to the offense. J.J. Hickson scored 13, Shaquille O'Neal had 12, Mo Williams 11, and Parker and West 10 apiece. This is what the Cavs had in mind when they picked up O'Neal, Moon and Parker in the off-season. They wanted real depth at center and shooting guard. They wanted to mix the old seamlessly in with the new. It hasn't happened just yet -- but golly, our guys sure are getting close.

* Again, LeBron summed it up best: "We are a really good team. We are still getting. We are still not as good as we want to be, but you do not want to be great in November and December. You do not want to be that great right now. You want to continue to improve."

And all of the above proves that, hey man, the Cavs are doing exactly that.

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