



Dear Mo and Delonte:

*Take your time healing. All is well.*

*Sincerely,*

*LeBron James*

It was just another wire-to-wire romp in 'The Q' on Tuesday night when the Cavs faced off against the Memphis Grizzlies. The Grizzlies team that beat the Lakers must have remained on Beale Street partying late into the night after their win over Los Angeles because they certainly didn't show up in Cleveland in time for Tuesday night's 7pm tip.

The most impressive part of the 105-89 win over Memphis (aside from James who we'll discuss in more detail later) was the fact the Cavaliers never let the Grizzlies sniff a whiff of hope. Cleveland got out to a big lead early, pushed it to a bigger lead at the half and then kept the pedal down to the floor until the game was, for all intents and purposes, over with five minutes remaining. The Cavs actually came out like they knew that Memphis was playing their fourth

game in five nights and just hammered the young and athletic club from Tennessee for the Cavaliers' ninth straight win.

In the process of winning another game comfortably, the Cavs exorcised from their minds a previous loss to the Grizzlies earlier this season in Memphis. And they did so emphatically.

James again led the Cavaliers in scoring, assists (a career high-tying 15, by the way) and in breathtaking plays. One of those breathtaking plays was a thunderous chase-down block of an OJ Mayo lay-up attempt that saw James catch Mayo from way behind and hammer his shot off the back board all the way out to mid-court where Shaquille O'Neal gathered it in and made a nice no-look pass to a streaking J.J. Hickson who was fouled on the play.

The block was stunning in that James closed a huge gap that Mayo had as well as its ferocity. It was part of LeBron's 22 point, 15 assist and 6 rebounds night.

For his part, O'Neal may have played his most complete game of the season in just 20 minutes of floor time. The Diesel scored an efficient 13 points on 6/10 shooting and also grabbed 13 rebounds of his own. O'Neal was also feeling frisky on the defensive end. In addition to grabbing those 13 boards Shaq also swatted four shots into the expensive seats and was a big part of an effort that saw the Cavs outscore the Grizzlies by 30 points in the paint.

Daniel Gibson scored 16 points; Hickson added 15 and Zydrunas Ilgauskas chipped in 14 points off the bench for the Cavs who move to 39-11 on the season.

The Grizzlies were led by Rudy Gay's 15 points while Jamaal Tinsley added 12 off the Memphis bench.

### **Takeaways**

- James doesn't need any more publicity or any more kudos for the season he's putting together. He's the reigning MVP and was the leading vote getter in the upcoming All-Star game.

But I'm telling you people now, you need to sit back, pay no mind to what the future may hold, and just bask in the season that LeBron is putting together. It's been a long time since a reigning MVP actually distanced himself from his closest competition for the award the following season. But James has clearly done it.

He's the best defensive player in the game right now. He's the go-to guy on the offensive and defensive side of the ball. He's averaging close to 30 points per night and could easily be near 40 if he wasn't surrounded by a supporting cast that he's comfortable setting up for their own scoring opportunities.

And he's doing all of it while being forced into a quasi-point guard role while Mo Williams and Delonte West recover from their injuries. The fact is, in five of the last six games James has taken to the facilitator role to the tune of 10 or more assists. The Cavs are in the midst of a nine game winning streak because James has elevated his already one-of-a-kind game.

Enjoy it completely and appreciate it for the once in a lifetime opportunity it most definitely is to watch the best in the business go to work here in Cleveland.

- The Cavs brought their lunch pails to the defensive side of the floor on Tuesday night and it thrilled Head Coach Mike Brown. After a couple of O'Neal blocks where the big man had rotated to help, Brown jumped off the bench and led the ovation for O'Neal and for the Cavs' defensive effort.

Gay, Mayo and All-Star Zach Randolph were held to a total of 33 points, 26 below their combined average for points coming into the game.

The Cavs out rebounded Memphis 43-40, enjoyed a 10-4 advantage in blocked shots and completely shut down the Grizzlies inside game.

**They Got Next**

It's more home cooking for the Cavaliers who are in the midst of a home stand that will see them spend 20 straight nights in their own beds. Dwyane Wade and the Miami Heat come to Cleveland on Thursday night for an 8pm tip at 'The Q' that will be televised on TNT.

You can bet Wade will be geeked for this rematch against James and the Cavaliers, especially after his missed free throws and carelessness with the basketball in the final seconds cost the Heat a win against the Cavs a little over a week ago.

James v. Wade rarely disappoints. Thursday should be no different.