



Let's hope the Cavaliers put the post-deadline deal acclimation issues behind them relatively quickly. Because a few more nights like Thursday against Denver and Friday night in Charlotte will erode their tenuous lead over the Lakers and Orlando Magic for the best record in the NBA and Eastern Conference and all the benefits that go with it.

The Cavs let an early lead slip away after the first quarter and completely disappeared in the third quarter as the Bobcats won a laugher Friday night, 110-93 in Time Warner Cable Arena.

Tied 50-50 at halftime the 'Cats outscored the Cavs 32-18 and knocked off the Cavaliers for the third straight time this year. And if you watched the game you wouldn't have been able to tell which team had just come off of a 13 game winning streak and which team had lost to the woeful New Jersey Nets just a few nights ago.

As far as newly acquired Antawn Jamison is concerned, well, the Titanic had only a slightly bumpier debut. Jamison went 0-12 from the floor and was held scoreless until he hit a couple free throws with just 40 seconds remained in garbage time. Five of his shot attempts were blocked and two others were air balls. Shots that Jamison has seemingly hit his entire career against the Cavaliers simply didn't drop for the new guy. He occasionally stumbled around like a man playing his first game with a new club will do, looking lost in the flow of the Cavaliers offense and shooting the ball tentatively.

Jamison did grab 7 rebounds and dished out an assist but he was clearly not comfortable at any point in the ballgame as he came off the Cavs bench for the game against Charlotte.

Charlotte got a huge night from Stephen Jackson who pretty much had his way all night. Jackson scored a game high 29 points and also collected eight rebounds while handing out four assists for good measure. Jackson was 9/17 from the floor and his ability to drop in the three-pointer (3/7) allowed him to also to get to the paint all night long.

In fact, Charlotte doubled up the Cavaliers with 48 points to the Cavs' 24 and the Bobcats shooters beat the Cavalier defenders off the ball all night long. Boris Diaw scored 18 points and somehow still found time to hand out nine assists, Gerald Wallace scored 17 and gathered in eight caroms and Raymond Felton added 16 points and six assists for Charlotte.

Takeaways

- The Cavaliers look like a team that has just made some personnel changes. The uncertainty in playing with Jamison was obvious. But they also look like a team still hung over from a long layoff. They lacked focus and intensity for much of Friday night and that's disappointing. More so given the fact that Charlotte has scoreboard over Cleveland in the season series (3-1) and may very well also be the Cavaliers first round opponent come playoff time.

- I'm not sure what it is about the Bobcats when see the Cavs but they play the James Gang very hard and very well. The addition of 4th year PF Tyrus Thomas doesn't hurt the Bobcats either. Thomas scored nine points and grabbed 12 rebounds in 25 effective minutes Friday.

- It's going to be interesting to see just when Head Coach Mike Brown makes his move with Jamison as far as the starting lineup goes. There's not much practice time available over the next couple weeks and with Orlando, New Orleans, Boston and Toronto on tap over the next seven days the Cavaliers need to get back to the business of winning basketball games.

They've now lost consecutive games for the first time since the first two games of the season and getting Jamison acclimated and involved needs to happen sooner rather than later.

You have to believe that he'll get far more open looks while playing with James and Shaq. And many of those open looks will be near or at the rim which could also get him to the line and in a rhythm. It's just a matter of time before Jamison is running with the first team.

Brown has an interesting dilemma ahead of him in the next couple weeks. He has to get Jamison up to speed while also winning enough games to keep the wolves at bay in the race for home court.

They Got Next

You certainly don't want to be struggling at all against anyone at this point in the season, but with the Magic looming Sunday in Orlando for a 1pm ABC match up the Cavs need to do what they can to right the ship quickly.

After Sunday in Orlando it's back home to 'The Q' for a Tuesday night game against New Orleans before heading back out on the road for a tough back-to-back with Boston Thursday night and Toronto on Friday.