

Cavs Finish Season Sweep of Nets, 111-92

Written by {ga=hermanfontenot}

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Seems this small-ball thing is working out pretty well so far.



Going small certainly paid dividends on Wednesday night in the Building Formerly Known as Brendan Byrne Arena, as the Cavaliers ran, jumped and stuffed their way to an easy 111-92 victory over the hopelessly outclassed New Jersey Nets. Cleveland has now won five straight, two of those lopsided conquests of Gotham-area teams without the services of Shaquille O'Neal, and is now 48-14 on the season. The Nets, taking dead aim at the NBA record for loses in a season, are now 6-54.

Quick Getaway: Despite losing its previous three games to the Cavaliers this season New Jersey had hung fairly tough in all of them, falling by respectable seven, eight and ten-point margins. But there was no respectability for the Nets on Wednesday night. After cutting Cleveland's lead to 8-7 on a driving lay-up by Trenton Hassell with 8:17 to go in the first period, New Jersey was outscored 35-14 in the next eleven minutes, falling behind 43-21 early in the second. The Nets wouldn't get closer than twelve the rest of the way.

Small-Ball Deluxe: Cleveland did much of its damage by running the floor and taking advantage of fast-break opportunities, particularly early in the game. 30 of the first 43 points for the Cavaliers came on either dunks or lay-ups. Cleveland's active defense forced seven New Jersey turnovers during the opening 43-21 spurt. Doing much of the damage for the Cavaliers was- surprise- LeBron James, who hung 16 points, 9 assists and 2 steals on the beleaguered hosts before leaving the game early in the second quarter. Bron was at his spectacular best early Wednesday night, combining heat-check jumpers, sky-high dunks and no-look passes in a scintillating package that had the Meadowlands crowd gasping.

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LeBron's Line: 26 points on 10-of-18 from the field, 0-of-4 from three-point range and 6-of-7 from the line with 14 assists, 7 rebounds, 3 steals and a blocked shot in a little under 41 minutes of action. (I'm not sure why LeBron played so much in a game that was never really in doubt; maybe he was just feeling it and wanted to be out there.) With Mo Williams in early foul trouble LeBron spent much of the first half running the point; needless to say, there was no drop-off in the team's fortunes.

Dyno-Mite, Again: Not to play soothsayer, but I sort of suspected that Cleveland would be in a better position to handle troublesome Nets center Brook Lopez than in the first three games, when Lopez proved too quick for either Shaquille O'Neal or Zydrunas Ilgauskas. Sure enough J.J. Hickson, despite giving up three inches and thirty pounds, nevertheless did a pretty darned good job containing New Jersey's top player. The jumping jack from N.C. State racked up 20 points on 9-of-14 shooting with 13 rebounds; Lopez had 21 points and 14 rebounds but shot a pedestrian 7-of-18 and did much of his damage late in the game after Hickson had already gone to the bench. Lopez is a tough cover, and he got his numbers- but young J.J. performed as well against the big man as anyone in Wine & Gold has all season.

Nice Balance: LeBron and J.J. were only two of five Cavaliers to score in double figures on Wednesday night. Antawn Jamison chipped in with 19 points and 9 rebounds (albeit on 23 shots), Mo Williams conquered his early foul trouble to pile up 16 points with 6 assists, and Anderson Varejao was his usual productive self off the bench with 12 points and 6 boards.

Never In Doubt: Cleveland led by double figures from the 3:45 mark of the first quarter on.

Good Defense: The Cavaliers held the Nets to 39.3 percent shooting on the night. It was their second consecutive strong showing on the defensive end, after several shaky outings in that area; they held the Knicks to 40.9 percent shooting on Monday.

Good Offense Too: The Cavaliers shot 51.8 percent and dished out 29 assists, as they continually took advantage of New Jersey's porous defense.

Next: Friday night at 7:00 when Cleveland's erstwhile arch-rival, the Detroit Pistons, come to

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the Q for what will hopefully be another milk run before what should be a tough road game at red-hot Milwaukee on Saturday night.