

## LeWho? Cavs Open New Era With Preseason Win

Written by {ga=samamico}

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CLEVELAND - Lots of random stuff from your Cavaliers' 87-72 home win over Charlotte in the preseason opener Tuesday:

\* That was fun. Seriously. That was the first thing that came to my mind when the game ended. Was it a thing of beauty? No. In fact, it was downright sloppy at times. But that was to be expected, especially when you consider the Cavs were missing two starters (Mo Williams and Anderson Varejao) -- and running their new motion offense under a new coach (Byron Scott) for the first time in a real live game.

\* Veterans such as Anthony Parker (10 points) and Jamarion Moon (10 rebounds) played particularly well, even though it was youngsters such as Daniel Gibson (18 point) and J.J. Hickson (17) who put up the nice numbers. Also, Antawn Jamison was just 1-for-9 shooting, but you could tell when he wasn't on the floor. When Jamison wasn't on the floor, the offense wasn't nearly as efficient.

\* Another very obvious aspect of this game came straight from Bobcats coach Larry Brown: "We're not in as good of shape as they are." And Brown was right, as conditioning is a big reason the Cavs were able to turn a 47-43 halftime deficit into a 15-point victory.

\* Scott smiled when he heard Brown say the Cavs are in better condition -- as running has been a staple of the Cavs' training camp. He jokingly told the players before the game that "we're in pretty good shape," with the emphasis on pretty good.

\* Scott also told the players at a team dinner that they won't lose a game because of conditioning, "and I plan to make sure that stays the truth."

\* Ramon Sessions started at point guard and did a nice job of running things, finishing with 11 points and five assists. Sessions attacked and stayed aggressive, and while he committed three turnovers, he did his part to keep the ball moving.

\* Speaking of being in shape, Sessions approached Parker during a break in the action when Parker was shooting free throws and told him, "I could run for days." Parker's response? "Don't let coach know that."

\* With so much focus on the Cavs' new offense, it's to forget about how the defense limited Charlotte to a miserable 31 percent shooting from the field and 72 paltry points. The Bobcats

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also committed 17 turnovers, compared to 11 for the Cavs.

\* It's the type of defense Scott expects the Cavs to play all the time. "I think we have to," he said. "In the next couple of weeks we're gonna tighten up some things on the defensive end and we'll get better."

\* The Cavs were last in the league in free-throwing percentage last season (72 percent) and Scott has promised they will get better in that area. So far, so good as they hit 28 of 35 on Tuesday for 80 percent.

\* The bottom line on this game is the veterans (Moon, Parker, Jamison) got things going and were very poised, while the younger players (Gibson, Hickson) forced a little early. When the young guys settled down and got into a rhythm, the Cavs were home-free.

\* You also had to like what Joey Graham had to offer as the starting small forward. He played with confidence and energy, and really went after rebounds and loose balls. The Raptors had been waiting for Graham to have a breakout season for some time, and it never happened. Maybe this can be the year.

\* On the downside, the Cavs' problems in the middle without Varejao became very evident. Ryan Hollins (7-foot-0) training camp invitee Loren Woods (7-2) are both long and tall, but neither is in position to rebound very often, and both seem to despise any sort of contact.

\* This is pure speculation, but the possibility remains that the Cavs could release second-year swingman Danny Green and go after another center before the season gets here.

\* Finally, old friends Darius Miles and DeSagana Diop are reserves for the Bobcats, and Miles was even the first guy off the bench Tuesday (0-for-2, 0 points). Diop did not play for personal reasons. But throw in Kwame Brown (out with a sprained ankle), and the Bobcats have a roster full of lottery picks who didn't pan out.

\* While on the subject of top picks, the Cavs return home Thursday to face point guard John Wall and Washington. Wall was the No. 1 overall pick in the June draft. Tip-off is 7 p.m.

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