



It's nights like Tuesday that really make you think the best course of action is for the Cavs to sell off anyone older than 25 and play for draft lottery ping-pong balls next May.

The Cavs lost to the Pacers in Indiana 100-89, and it wasn't even close to being that close. The Cavs (5-8) looked every bit like the undertalented, undermanned, undersized band of misfits that LeBron relished ditching by the free agent roadside last summer.

If this is going to be the trend of the season, a 17-65 record is a small price to pay for a top three pick in next year's draft.

In short, the Pacers (7-6) pulled out to an 11-point first quarter lead and were never threatened afterward. Their lead swelled to 62-37 at the half, and with the punchless Cavs offense trying in vain to make up ground in the second half, the game's outcome was all but decided after 24 minutes.

After similar showings against much better competition in New Orleans and San Antonio, Byron Scott decided to shake his rotations up a bit. Joey Graham made his starting debut in place of Jamario Moon, and managed 11 points on 4-of-10 shooting in 27 minutes. A far cry from the days when the small forward position was a guaranteed 30 points a night.

J.J. Hickson took eight shots all night, making four, and finished with nine points. That wasn't so good. His 10 rebounds was a bit more promising, though not a single one was at the offensive end.

Other than that, the starting five gave the Cavs very little. Anderson Varejao and Mo Williams, both still hobbled by assorted injuries, scored six points apiece. Varejao added five rebounds. Anthony Parker did his best impression of a mannequin, netting a fresh-baked bagel in the scoring column, missing all five shots he took.

Graham was the only member of the starting five to take even 10 shots. Wasn't LeBron's departure supposed to open up the offensive for everyone?

The bench fared slightly better, with three players reaching double digits. We'll refer to them as "the usual suspects." Antawn Jamison scored 12 points, and was the only Cav who appeared to care one iota about keeping possessions alive. Four of his six boards came at the offensive end.

Daniel Gibson and Ramon Sessions tied for the team lead with 15 points apiece on a relatively tidy 6-of-10 and 7-of-12 shooting, respectively.

Sessions, Jawad Williams and Leon Powe helped spark a fourth-quarter quasi-uprising that turned what would likely have been a 30-point obliteration into a slightly-less-embarrassing 11-point loss. Of course, much of that had to do with the fact that Pacers coach Jim O'Brien had pulled his starters by that point and was playing out the garbage time string with the likes of Tyler Hansbrough.

The Pacers' pacer was, no surprise, Danny Granger, who had 24 points on 7-of-17 shooting, including five three-balls, and made Cavs fans everywhere wonder what it would take to entice Larry Bird to trade him to Cleveland (It ain't happening anywhere but your Xbox, folks.)

Darren Collison (18 points), Mike Dunleavy (10 points) and Brandon Rush (16 points) were also key contributors for Indiana.

The Cavs are right back at it Wednesday night at The Q vs. Milwaukee, another slow starter with an identical 5-8 record. For sanity's sake, this might be a must-win for the Cavs. After Wednesday's game, two of the next three are against Orlando and Boston, followed by next Thursday's much-anticipated and/or dreaded matchup with the Heat.