

## Weary Indiana- Cavs Drop 10th Straight

Written by {ga=hermanfontenot}

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For nearly two full quarters of Friday night's match-up with the Indiana Pacers in Conseco Fieldhouse, the Cavaliers threatened to do something they hadn't done the entire month of December- win a basketball game. Cleveland led 23-19 at the end of the first period and still clung to a one-point lead just before halftime. Anthony Parker and Antawn Jamison were en fuego, the basketball was moving, and for a brief instant it appeared that this might finally be the night the Cavaliers broke their longest losing streak since LeBron's senior year of high school.

Alas, a basketball game is four quarters long, not two. And in the final two quarters the Pacers asserted themselves. Behind a big night from Danny Granger and able supporting efforts from Roy Hibbert, Mike Dunleavy and Brandon Rush, Indiana asserted itself in the second half and won going away, 108-99. The loss was Cleveland's tenth in a row, and its third of the season to these Pacers. At 12-13 Indiana isn't exactly a member of the league's elite- but they might as well be the '87 Lakers compared to the band of misfits the Cavaliers are rolling out every night.

The best player on the floor Friday night was, as usual, Danny Granger. The sixth-year swingman from New Mexico, who lit up the Cavaliers for 34 points in his Indiana's victory over Cleveland on November 13, was at it again with 30 points on 12-of-22 shooting with 12 rebounds and three blocked shots. Ten of those point came in the fourth period as the Pacers

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put the game away, building a 17-point lead with eight minutes to play. Granger didn't have any assists on Friday. He didn't need to look for his teammates; not with the point guard duo of Darren Collison and T.J. Ford combining for 12 dimes on their own. The rebounds came in handy, however, part of a 49-38 Indiana edge on the boards.

Granger had plenty of help. Center Roy Hibbert threw in 15 points and swatted six Cleveland shots. Lanky Mike Dunleavy added 15 of his own with a pair of three-point makes, while Brandon Rush added 15 more off the bench. Indiana played nine men on Friday night, and all of them accounted for at least six points.

Cleveland had similar balance in defeat. Five Cavaliers scored in double figures, led by 22 points from Mo Williams. Anthony Parker had a big first half, scoring 15 points and lacing all four of his three-point attempts before fading with a two-point second half. Antawn Jamison added 17 points and led the Cavaliers with seven rebounds. But the efforts of these three plus those of Anderson Varejao (15 points, six rebounds) and J.J. Hickson (11 points) were not enough to overcome 41.5 percent shooting and a losing battle off the backboards.

So the death march continues. Starting on Saturday night in the Q against the New York Knicks, Cleveland has six games remaining in the month of December. Of these perhaps two- December 26 at home against Minnesota (6-21) and December 29 at Charlotte (9-17)- look remotely winnable. No win can be counted ahead of time for the Cavaliers, of course. The good news is that more than a quarter of the season has already been played. The bad news is that nearly three quarters of the season remains to be played.