



**The essentials:**

1. You can be mad at LeBron for leaving the way he did. But at this point, how can you as a Cavs fan dispute that he did the right thing in shrugging off this needy wet blanket of a franchise and the overall attitude of the Cleveland-area public? For seven years we groveled at LeBron's feet, we licked his boots, we put up with his noncommittal shenanigans while he toyed with us. We never commanded respect from him. We were too worried about losing him. In any relationship where one party worships the other, sooner or later, the object of the worship grows tired and bored, and the worshipper just starts to look pathetic. And so it was with us, the Cavs and LeBron.

2. So how long are you going to stay mad at him, Dan Gilbert? When the losing streak hits 30? 40? 50? Because it's probably going to. You have a team that is flat-out not interested in competing. How long is your team going to play the role of martyr just so you can show the world how badly LeBron screwed you over?

3. You're so focused on winning the PR battles, Dan. That's how you built your business empire to begin with. People can get a mortgage anywhere. They come to Quicken Loans for the fun

and the atmosphere. You do want to express yourself, don't you?

4. But it's not a PR battle, Dan. You have to actually win games in professional sports, or the fans stop buying tickets. They won't show up to help you play your sympathy violin. Crucifying yourself and painting LeBron as a Roman soldier casting lots for your garments....it started to get old right about when your team laid a rotten egg against the Heat on Dec. 2. Apparently, that e-mail ended up in your spam box. Either that, or you're such an emotional nut job, you're incapable of thinking clearly anymore. In which case, the ghost of Ted Stepien thanks you for assuming the title of worst owner in Cleveland sports history.

5. ....Oh yeah, the Cavs did play the Heat again on Monday. They lost badly, LeBron and Dwyane Wade carried the load, Antawn Jamison continues to play well enough to get traded, losing streak is a crapload and counting, etc., etc.

### **Let it be:**

I'm almost to the point where I don't want to see the Cavs make any moves. Why risk a late-season uptick in performance that turns 8-74 into 18-64, and maybe fewer balls in the lottery machine? This Cavs team is a perfect storm of suck. Psychologically devastated by LeBron's betrayal, assailed by injuries to key players, led by a disaffected coach, a rookie GM and a tantrum-throwing owner.

If you start moving chess pieces around, you risk upsetting that delicate negative balance. Bring in some players who aren't reeling from LBJ's defection, and the team might start to show some backbone and win games. Then, suddenly, you're picking sixth instead of first. Who needs that?

### **This ought to be good:**

The Cavs are beginning their 2011-12 season ticket renewal campaign. Monday evening, their website featured a testimonial from a longtime season ticket holder who says he's renewing his season tickets because he "believes in this organization and this city."

When a team starts building their sales campaign around civic pride, you know the product is bad. Remember the last time the Cavs went all Cleveland on us? "This is Cleveland! This is our town! This is our team! And it rocks!" It was 2002 and Ricky Davis was the best player on the team.

If the two options are "Job as Cavs season ticket sales rep" and "starve," you might seriously consider the latter, at least through this summer.

### **Up next for the Cavs:**

Indiana, Wednesday, 7 p.m. at The Q. They might win this game. No, seriously, they might. I don't have my fingers crossed behind my back. I'm not lying! Stop trying to look behind my back!