

Cavs Tip Knicks: An Imbiber's Diary

Written by {ga=hermanfontenot}

Friday, February 25 2011 6:35 PM - Last Updated Saturday, February 26 2011 11:38 AM



Why am I imbibing? Because a.) It is Friday night, b.) Kitchen is clean, c.) I have all the food and smokes I need for the time being, d.) Little Schoolteacher is in Columbus, e.) Neighbor plowed our driveway when I was working today, f.) I drove to work sideways this morning and made it, g.) Jack & Coke is luscious on a cold winter's night, h.) I'm imbibing responsibly and h.) Why the eff not?

Imbibing is purely incidental to the game diary/recap, by the way. It will add nothing to the diary/recap. Just letting you know ahead of time.

If not for the lateness of the season and the weakness of the playoff seed, I'd consider the Knicks, as constituted after the trades, at least a borderline threat to come out of the East. They've got a championship-caliber point guard (as long as he's not jacking up dumb heat-check three-pointers) and a pair of bona-fide superstars; they don't need much else.

Then again, Ronni Turiaf does start for them...

I just remembered that Mike D'Antoni coaches the Knicks. Disregard the entire preceding paragraph.

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J.J. with the block on Billups. Will it be 6-2 or 21-12 tonight for the slack-jawed ex-Wolf Packer?

After New York jumps out in front 5-0 Antawn tips in his own miss. Antawn is 1-of-3; he likes to shoot.

Melo drains the quick shot off the post-up. Cleveland has missed two lay-ups while New York has a guy who can make like Kevin McHale. 7-2 Knicks

Antawn has taken five shots in barely four minutes of play. Again, Antawn likes to shoot.

Antawn's sixth shot in less than five minutes, a running scoop off a Ramon Sessions feed, results in a three-point play. Shoot it, Antawn!

J.J. has been active so far; his steal and coast-to-coast lay-up makes it 14-10 Cavaliers just after the midway point of the first. Cleveland is active defensively, forcing several New York turnovers and fueling a 12-3 run.

Christian Eyenga, who drained a jumper in the sequence, reminds me a tiny bit of the late, great Bobby Phills: athletic, an instinctive and natural defender, a hard worker but not so natural on the jump shot. I like him; only partly because he's 21, I'm 35, yet he looks older than me.

(My favorite Cavalier in the '90s was Bobby Phills; my favorite Brown of the '90s was Eric Turner. Damn. I believe Scooter Tucker is still here with us, though.)

Hickson makes it six points, makes it 16-10 and forces a timeout by Mike D'Antoni, the Man from the Pringles Can.

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Ramon Sessions rolls in a tough runner. Why don't teams simply sag off of him?

J.J. is officially on fire, swatting an Amare Stoudamire shot and pouring in a turnaround off the post. It's 20-13 Cavaliers.

J.J. grabs an offensive rebound and swoops in for the lay-up. He has ten points and there's 3:14 left in the first. New York's defense is... inadvertent.

Bill Walker and Landry Fields have a pair of three-pointers apiece. Those bonus buckets are keeping New York in the game at 26-21.

Carmelo drains a three. Okay, that's not a bonus. A late run gives New York a 30-28 lead at the end of one period.

Daniel Gibson doesn't look good, hair-wise or game-wise. Or maybe it's just the awkward way in which he wears his headband. Is Norris Cole responsible for Boob's late '80s hairstyle?

New York stretches its run to 18-3 as the second quarter opens. 36-29 Knicks with two-and-a-half gone in the period.

Now STAT is on fire and it's 40-31. The run is 22-5.

It's now 41-37 New York midway through the second. But the Cavaliers are playing well- they're moving the ball well on offense and causing a small measure of havoc defensively. Hey, if this keeps up we might have ourselves a game, especially with Chauncey Billups invisible with early foul trouble.

Landry Fields has another three-pointer. I don't think he's missed yet. I guess he's tonight's

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version of Chase Buddinger.

J.J. has 12 points, eight rebounds and four blocked shots thus far. Way to show up, young man.

Chauncey Billups stumbles into an offensive foul with the Knicks leading by nine. I don't know if it's the building or what, but Chauncey never seems to play well in Cleveland. He's been a non-factor tonight and already has three personal fouls.

And then J.J. pretends he's Brad Daugherty and dumps a pass down to a cutting Ramon Sessions for the lay-up. Next thing you know, McDonald's will want to name a cheeseburger after the kid. "It's enough to make a fella feel... seven feet tall."

Every time Knicks go up by eight or nine the Cavaliers come back with a quick burst to stay in it. Ramon Sessions rips STAT and feeds to Anthony Parker, who drops in a pair of free throws off a foul. It's 49-45 late in the half.

Anthony Parker has come on with a rush late in the second period. He drops a tough jumper with 31 seconds left that makes it 53-50 New York.

From the "a lot can happen in one second" file: J.J. takes a charge from Carmelo Anthony and Sessions drills a [James Forrest-style](#) three to tie the score at halftime, 53-53.

It's been a good one. Cleveland is playing solid basketball; J.J. and Sessions are beasting and Christian Eyenga has been all over Carmelo Anthony. Glad I drank for this one. So far.

STAT opens the second half with a dunk and harm on J.J., who outplayed him in the first half.

Cleveland breaks into the lead 59-58 at 9:29 of the third, as Sessions finds Anthony Parker for

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the behind-the-back lay-up. Earlier Eyenga fought past a screen and bothered Carmelo into a missed jumper. I'm rapidly falling in like with Eyenga.

Just then, Carmelo muscles past Eyenga for the and-one.

Wait a minute- Carmelo has 21? Really? I hadn't even noticed.

Hickson goes up with the left hand over Stoudamire. He's been just superb tonight. Moments later J.J. baits STAT into a foul with a pump fake and drops a pair of free throws, giving him twenty points to go with nine rebounds and a career-high five blocked shots. 69-66 Cleveland and an 8-1 Cavalier run at 6:44 of the third.

Alonzo Gee finishes a scrambling, loose ball-getting possession with a driving dunk, and it's 74-70 Cleveland with 4:37 left in the third. The effort is there.

Daniel Gibson finally gets going with a three. 77-72 Cavaliers, 4:02.

Cleveland is completely dominating New York on the boards, a fact the Knicks should be ashamed of. Alonzo Gee- who has played nice minutes tonight- retrieves a Jamison miss with 31 seconds remaining in the third. So far the Cavaliers just want it more. Gee buries a three-pointer six seconds later and it is 83-75 Cleveland at the end of the period.

One quarter to go, and the Cavaliers have a chance to steal their tenth straight from the Knicks.

Dan Gibson lays one in on New York's lax defense and the Cavaliers have hit their high-water mark: up ten with 11:12 remaining in the fourth.

Tony Douglas of the Knicks somehow makes a steal while seated on the floor. Might be the first

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time I've seen that in an NBA game.

Anthony Parker bottoms out a wild fade-away, gets fouls and converts the three-point play for an 89-77 lead with 9:12 left. Twenty-two seconds later he drives and hits a runner with harm and it's 92-80. The Israel Sports Legend has been a G-d send tonight.

Cleveland is already in the bonus with 7:17 left and a ten-point lead. Nice, nice.

Midway through the fourth it's still 95-84 in favor of the Cavaliers.

Chauncey Billups has been leaning into fouls the entire fourth period. He sinks three in a row off a foul on a triple attempt and it is 96-90 with 5:21 left. I hope I left enough time on the DVR...

Billups drills a three. 96-93 with 5:03 left. That is a 9-1 run in barely over a minute.

Antawn hits his first shot in a millennium. It's 98-93 with 4:38 left. Then another make, a free throw, two more free throws for the old man out of North Carolina and it is 103-95 with 3:19 left.

New York strikes for six consecutive points to make it 103-101 with two minutes left. Time runs out on the DVR. Who has won? The tension mounts...

Cleveland has won. Daniel Gibson drills a clutch three-pointer with thirty seconds left to salt it away. Cavaliers win, 115-109. For a minute I was afraid the Cavaliers would be 10-48 instead of 11-47.

Antawn Jamison leads the way for Cleveland with 28 points, 13 rebounds and three assists. J.J.- you slack-jawed tease, you- goes for 24, 15 and those five blocks. Ramon Sessions hits for 22 with eight rebounds and four assists, yet another in a string of outstanding efforts by him.

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Anthony Parker is almost perfect- 5-of-6 from the field, 6-of-6 from the line- on the way to 16 points, five rebounds and four assists.

Cleveland's superior effort results in a 62-42 rebounding edge. Stat of the night: the Cavaliers scored 115 points despite shooting 42.4 percent and 6-of-21 from downtown. They slaughtered New York in second-chance points all night.

Cleveland's LeBron-fostered ownership of the Knicks continues in his absence. Then again, the Price-Daugherty-Nance teams owned the ["Thug-Ball" Knicks](#) of the early '90s, too. Those games were like Dean Youngblood versus his brother: They couldn't play; all they could do was fight.

New York gets 84 combined points from Billups, Anthony and Stoudamire. They get 25 combined points on 10-of-33 shooting from the other six guys who play. Landry Fields is not the next Chase Buddinger- he winds up with eleven. The Knicks get twelve points off their bench. They are outworked by the Cavaliers. Our butts weep for them.

Maybe it's the liquor, but I can't root for Cavalier defeats, even if it stands to increase the number of balls in the hopper. I like to see them play well and win. Hell, I'd root for a firing squad if they had "Cleveland" on their uniforms. It was a game to imbibe to.

Next: Sunday at 5:00, when the Cavaliers entertain the mildly surprising 76ers.