



Powered by a trio of round-trippers from Shin-Soo Choo, Asdrubal Cabrera, and Matt LaPorta, the Tribe topped the Red Sox 8-4 last night to claim their third straight--- wait, what? Cavs wrap-up? The Cavs are still playing? Sh\*t. ... Well, did they win? Oh, that's right. I'm supposed to be telling you that. Ok. . . . Hey, looks like they did. Yay!

Yup, your Cavaliers did indeed defeat the undermanned Toronto Raptors last night, 104-96, in perhaps the least watched "double-victory" in Cleveland sports history. By an eye count, roughly 2,000 spectators cheered on the Tribe at Progressive Field, while-- I don't know-- probably 17 people tuned in the Cavs-Raptors game (held at whatever Toronto's arena is called); most likely because they mistakenly thought FSN still showed Indians games.

Depending on whether you're cheering for the 2010-2011 Cavaliers or the 2011-2012 Cavaliers, however, your opinion on this rare hardcourt triumph might vary.

Devoted fans of the "Future Cavs" are well aware that their team needs a helping hand from the "Present Cavs" to improve their odds at scoring the sort of lottery balls that will hatch into Kembas, Kyries, or Jimmers this June. A month or so ago, the Present Cavs seemed to have this mission well under control. But a late, meteoric descent by the Minnesota Timberwolves has suddenly cast ownership of the NBA dungeon into doubt. Coming into tonight, Cleveland only led the T-Wolves by a half game in the race to rock bottom. And thanks to the efforts of J.J. Hickson and the phoned-in performance of the Canadian dinosaur team, that advantage has now vanished entirely.

While the Cavs were busy winning consecutive games for the first time since back when the previous MLB season had just ended, the Timberwolves were dropping their twelfth straight (108-98 to Phoenix), meaning that Minnesota (17-62) now sits a game ahead in the loss column—in a backward sense, of course—with about a week to go. Keep in mind, the difference between having the worst record in the league and second worst is a 5% swing in the odds of getting the top pick (25% to 19.9%). Of course, owning the Clippers pick adds an additional 2-3% into the mix for Cleveland, but still... every little bit counts.

Fun Factoid: The Cavaliers were battling for the best record in the league at this time a year ago. Best record is the polar opposite of worst record. Wow. Kooky!

Cavs 104, Raptors 96: Positives and Negatives

### **POSITIVES**

#### **1. Two in a Row!**

Back on November 9, the Cavaliers edged New Jersey 93-91 to win their third straight and improve to 4-3 on the young season. Mo Williams shot 1-12 in that game for 2 points and Jawad Williams played 20 minutes. What happened to Jawad Williams? Did he just kind of slink away when no one was looking and go to Europe or something? Anyway, the Cavs hadn't won consecutive games since that night. Five months later, though, they finally got it done, following up Tuesday's win over the shitty Bobcats with a similarly workmanlike conquering of the craptacular Raptors.

#### **2. The Usual Suspects Deliver**

From the tip-off, the Cavs took advantage of the absence of Andrea Bargnani and Amir Johnson and completely owned the pace and the post. Hickson dropped in a quick 8 points on two 15-footers and two interior bunnies, and Cleveland led 28-17 after the first quarter. J.J. remained the center of attention in quarter #2, dropping in 13 more points to help the Cavalier lead balloon to as much as 22. It was 60-40 at the half, and while Hickson would fade a bit in the second half, he'd still wind up with another super stellar line of 28-10-3. And when he and Ryan Hollins (14 pts, 4 rebs) were neutralized during a Toronto rally in the fourth quarter, the Cavalier guards picked up the slack—Baron von Beardhausen, in particular. With the lead

whittled down to 88-82 with 5:54 to play, Davis checked in for Ramon Sessions (15 pts off the bench himself) and swiftly nailed three key jumpers, while also assisting on a Hickson jam and a Anthony Parker triple to seal up the contest. Baron's line: 19 points, 12 assists, 3 steals, 2 rebounds. The Beard is an above average baller.

### 3. Violence

Joey "Moonlight" Graham managed to make his eight minutes on the floor count, even though he shot 1-4 and finished the night with a -10 +/- for the team's cause. Late in the third quarter, Joey took an elbow to the noggin from James Johnson, and proceeded to engage the Raptor forward in physical combat. Double technicals ensued. And why, may you ask, is this meaningless scuffle between two NBA nomads featured here in the Positives section? Well, because it'd be all too easy to reduce this game to a passing of two sinking ships in the night,; two franchises abandoned by their captains and left to capsiz in a sea of boos. But at least they still appeared to give a damn. At least for a few minutes.

## NEGATIVES



### 1. They Won

I mean, if you're going to go the extra mile of breaking the league record for consecutive losses and losing half your team to injury or trade, you might as well go ahead and secure the perks of being the best loser, right? Unfortunately, the Cavs underestimated the pesky Timberwolves

(seen at the top of their game to the right there); a team much more accustomed to losing and clearly adept at rope-adope-ing other horrible teams into a false sense of sucktitude security.

### **2. Christian Eyenga Didn't Play**

I'm not sure why. I could look it up, I guess. But it's late and I'm really tired. Why don't you actually do something for yourself for once?

### **3. The Cavs Factor on the Indians Attendance Woes**

Consider the demise of the Cavaliers as a marketable product and the realization that even the greatest possible scenario for success (top draft pick, homegrown superstar, big-spending owner, big name free agents) can and will end in heartbreak and failure. It's a bit more subtle perhaps in the grand scheme, but since watching a young baseball team with zero playoff aspirations is largely an activity dependent on optimism and patience, the recent events over at the Q could have as much of a role in the dwindling attendance at the P as anything else.

Doesn't it make sense to call it "The P," by the way? It's next to "The Q." Do they not call it "The P" because it conjures images of urine? Is it because the letter Q is kind of the hipster of letters, and thus a cooler one-letter nickname than P, which again, conjures pee or generally unlikable vegetables at best?

Hey, the Bulls are in town Friday! Remember when the Cavaliers beat them in the playoffs a year ago? You shouldn't. You aren't helping anyone harping on the past like that.