



Mike Prada of the SB Nation blog [Bullets Forever](#) perfectly summed up what rebuilding means in his post “Bucks-Wizards Fallout and the Roger Mason Gaffe.” In it, he argues the following:

“These are dangerous times for the Wizards’ organization. The Wizards are rebuilding, and losing is going to come naturally. But there has to be some sign of progress. There has to be some growth from the star players and the role players. There has to be a sense that the team continues to act like they are competing for big things instead of merely talking about competing for big things one day. Right now, we’re not seeing any of that.”

It has been argued that this campaign for the Cavaliers is not about winning and losing games. When a team is rebuilding, it is important to gather talented players through the draft, maintain cap space flexibility, have a coaching staff in place that will be a stabilizing factor and maintaining a balance of having a good chance in the lottery but not giving the franchise a losing culture that will haunt them for years.

Despite the loss against the Pacers, it is difficult for Cavs fans to not feel good about the direction of the team. The team does not have any knuckleheads like Andray Blatche signed on long-term deals. They have a pass-first point guard who has a dynamic offensive game. Although the Cavs will not win many games, it is easy to see that they are on the right track.

When Kyrie Irving split the defense and had a fairly open lane to the basket in the closing seconds of regulation against the Pacers, it seemed as if the Cavs were going to win the game. Instead, the ball bounced around the rim and fell out. What looked like a win for the Cavs turned into a 7 point overtime loss. Cavs fans can dwell on that play or Kyrie Irving's 2-8 shooting in the 4th quarter and overtime, but they shouldn't. This season more than ever, it is important to look at the big picture.

Kyrie Irving is quickly becoming more comfortable in the offense. He notched his first of many 20 point games on the road against a solid team. Once again, his court vision is proving to be very impressive. When dissecting his talent, it is important to not only look at the box scores or one missed layup and come to a snap-judgement. He is already showing that he actually wants the ball in close games, which is not something that can be learned. He is also showing that he has great court vision. Most importantly, he is displaying an ability to learn from previous games and learn from them. Reggie Miller has said that in order to be a great clutch player, "you have to be willing to fail." The potential game-winning basket did not fall against the Pacers, but it was great to see that he wanted to be in that situation. I was very happy when the Cavs drafted him and he is reaffirming those feelings so far in this young campaign.

The Cavs started the game off with a 16-8 lead over the Pacers in the first 4 minutes of the first quarter. As strong as their start to the game was, they played just as bad (if not worse) in the 3rd quarter when they shot a dismal 22.2% from the field. If the Cavs want to win tough road games against quality competition, they simply cannot come out flat like that. The other major issue that the Cavs had was their free throw shooting. It is damn-near impossible to win a game when you shoot 18-31 from the stripe. Combine the poor free-throw shooting with less than 40% shooting from the field, and you have a pretty solid explanation for why the Cavs couldn't get the win.

So far, one of the most disappointing players has been Omri Casspi. A recurring theme of my writing is to avoid knee-jerk reactions and to give time to things pan-out. Omri Casspi is shooting 26.7% from the field and not doing much of anything to help his team win games. Casspi is clearly not Jiri Welsch reincarnated. Because of this, I think it's important to reserve

judgement on him and hope that it is injury-related. He hasn't been moving effectively and he does not seem comfortable with his jump shots. It goes without saying that Omri Casspi has been a disappointment thus far, but he is coming off an injury and the sample size is quite small.

With his 14 points and 10 rebounds, Anderson Varejao notched his second double-double of the season. Varejao's production has been a pleasant surprise, but it is hard to not be concerned with his ability to stay healthy. The injuries that he sustained to his back and ankle appear to not be serious in nature, but his season is going to be in jeopardy if it continues.

The Pacers can point to their strong inside play as a reason for why they had success against the Cavs. David West, Roy Hibbert and Tyler Hansborough combined for 42 points and 35 rebounds. That is very impressive production by the Pacers big men. They have a strong and deep team and will win more games than they lose and have the ability to make some noise in the playoffs. David West's presence was felt and he is showing that his all star appearances were not simply due to Chris Paul.

The Good: Kyrie Irving was more aggressive offensively and built upon his performance in Detroit.

The Bad: 58.1% shooting from the free-throw line is pretty good for Tristan Thompson. Unfortunately, that was the entire team's percentage from the stripe.

The Ugly: Anderson Varejao had two too many injury scares for my liking. He is an effective NBA big man and is a real pleasure to watch play basketball, but his injury history is concerning.