

Cavs Crush Bobcats, 115-102

Written by {ga=mrburns}

Tuesday, January 03 2012 11:43 PM - Last Updated Thursday, January 05 2012 7:39 AM



The Cavs exploded for 115 points and won for the second straight game, pushing their record to 3-2. The last time the Cavs were about .500 was last season, when they held a 4-3 record through 7 games. Hopefully this time around they can keep their heads above water a little bit longer.

Note: When I looked up that statistic, I expected 2010's opening night win over Boston to be the last time they were over .500. I guess that makes last year's team overachievers?

The Charlotte Bobcats rolled into The Q tonight and let's just say that Hanes® pitch man Michael Jordan has his work cut out for him. Paul Silas' Bobcats look like a lock to earn lots of ping pong balls come June, and I'm saying this after just five games.

Charlotte doesn't do anything well except get out on the fast break. After the Cats had an early run, the Cavs took complete control. The Bobcats led by 7 after a quarter, but they shot over 62% to do it. Once they came down to Earth, the Cavs' jumpers heated up and fueled two 30-point quarters that put them ahead for good.

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Cleveland's defense wasn't particularly good, but Charlotte's was awful. Byron Scott has his guys defending the perimeter. I remain very interested to see how this smallish Cavs team fares against a polished post presence, and their upcoming road trip will pit them against the likes of LaMarcus Aldridge, Al Jefferson, and Pau Gasol.

Kyrie Irving and Tristan Thompson continue to impress. Thompson delivered 16 points and 9 boards, both career highs. Kyrie Irving had a career high 20 points and tied his best with 6 assists. Just as importantly, Irving was 8-of-10 from the field with no turnovers. That kind of efficiency is rare for such a young player and hopefully it's a sign of things to come.

Both draft choices have exceeded expectations thus far. There was plenty of chatter leading up to the draft that Irving wasn't a true "franchise player," and unworthy of the number one pick. Maybe he isn't, but it sure seems early to rule that out. It wasn't the Cavs' fault that it was a weak draft. The kid seems remarkably poised when you consider that he won't be able to drink beer until March of 2013. If you didn't see Irving's chase down block on what looked like an easy layup, be sure to check out SportCenter.

Tristan Thompson is still raw, but his maturity has also been impressive. Especially after watching three years of J.J. Hickson, Thompson looks downright polished. Thompson has the potential to average a double-double sooner rather than later, and if he can develop a midrange game then he has the chance to be a real force.

Antawn Jamison poured in 19 points and is a pretty good bet to be the team's high scorer, assuming he isn't traded at the deadline. Some people are going to whine about Jamison's defensive shortcomings and I'm not here to apologize for them; he was never a great defender and turning 35 hasn't helped. That said, the Cavs need someone who can put the ball in the hoop, and Jamison qualifies. He can also team with Anthony Parker to bring some leadership and professionalism to an otherwise youthful group.

Part of the reason why Dan Gilbert hired Byron Scott was to make a big splash and persuade LeBron James to stay, but it looks like a great move regardless. Scott's guys have a better grasp of his offense than I expected and they're playing very unselfish basketball. The Cavs never moved the ball like this when James was in town.

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Former Cavs coach Paul Silas was interviewed before the game and he said something that stuck with me. When asked about this new version of the Cavaliers, Silas said, "Everyone seems happy; they're playing with a lot of joy." I can feel that as a fan and Silas said it better than I ever could.

Maybe I'm naïve or a homer, but I'm buying this team. They obviously won't compete for a title this season and there will be some growing pains, but regardless of how many games they win I'm confident that they will be fun to watch. If last season was about mourning and hating the Heat, then maybe this season is about starting to put the pieces back together. So far, so good.