



The game in 300 words or less

Well, that was awfully disappointing. The Cavs looked like they were going to be routed in the first quarter, fought back in the second, took the lead in the third, then faded in the fourth despite plenty of opportunities to take control and win the game. In a weird way the Celtics are tailor-made for the Cavs because they don't have enough firepower to run the Cavs out of the gym. At this point it's going to be easier for the Cavs to hang with a half court team like Boston than a team that want to get out and run.

The "Big Three" Celtics are clearly on their way out, but this was a case where their experience gave them just enough of an edge to notch just their fifth road win of the season.

Kyrie Irving led the way for the Cavs with 24 (what else is new?) and added to his highlight reel with a pretty incredible defensive play; beating Paul Pierce down the floor in transition and getting into position to take a charge. Any big contribution from a supporting player would have probably given the Cavs the win, but Antawn Jamison, Ramon Sessions, and Daniel Gibson all struggled shooting the basketball. Alonzo Gee had some success and probably should have

Notebook: Celtics 86, Cavs 83

Written by {ga=mrburns}

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forced the issue more on offense. Such is life on a team without a true number one scoring option.

Irving watch – 24 PTS (8/14, 3/3 from three), 4 REB, 3 AST, 2 TO

Kyrie Irving isn't the same type of player as LeBron James, but we've had pretty good luck with number one picks lately. Irving's rookie season is more impressive in many ways because he has to play a more demanding position and doesn't have the raw physical gifts to simply head to the rim like a bull, as James could. With games like this becoming commonplace for Irving, we're already getting spoiled.

We all had a little scare when Irving came up grasping his right arm after he drew the aforementioned charge against Paul Pierce in the second quarter, but he came back into the game and had an excellent second half. Fred McLeod mentioned that Irving had an elbow contusion, but I doubt the Cavs would have allowed him to reenter the game if they were worried about serious swelling.

I just can't get over Kyrie's efficiency for a point guard; he's shooting roughly 48% for the season. If this is close to Irving's ceiling and he just continues to refine his game, that's fine. You can win a championship if Kyrie Irving is one of your two best players. But what if this is only 60-70% of what he can be?

Young bigs stepping up

After a solid performance in the Rookie/Sophomore game – or whatever the hell they call it now

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– Tristan Thompson had arguably the best game of his career, with 13 points, 10 boards, 2 blocks, and no turnovers. Thompson is a guy whose career could go either way, but if he gets more under control and ups his basketball IQ he can start for a long time.

Kudos also belong to Semih Erden for another efficient little game. Four points and six rebounds on two shots isn't too shabby, and things might be starting to click for Erden. Offensively, Erden probably should have forced the issue more just like Alonzo Gee.

The Cavs are going to give Erden a long hard look because, well, why not? Erden may not be athletic enough to become a solid NBA starter, but it's not too outlandish to suggest he could become a solid rotation player. Just finding a seven footer who can walk and chew gum is difficult, so it makes sense for the Cavs to let Erden try to find his comfort level in a developmental season when wins and losses aren't always the goal.

Sessions on the way out?

Ramon Sessions started out hot, but cooled off and ended up playing just 20 minutes. I expected Sessions to see heavier minutes against the aging Celtics as the Cavs look to showcase him for a potential trade. It will be interesting to see how much interest Sessions garners as the March 15th trade deadline approaches. One thing is for sure – if the Cavs don't get another scorer in return, wins are going to be even tougher to come by down the stretch.

Get 'em a body bag!

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The Celtics are toast, and it's pretty amazing how quickly things have deteriorated. Generously speaking, this is a pretty mediocre Cavs team that they were lucky to beat after a weekend of rest. It is tough to believe that they were a Kendrick Perkins injury away from winning the Finals less than two years ago.

If Danny Ainge were smart, he'd start blowing his club up and selling off pieces that still have value. The Celtics are one of the weakest transition teams that I've ever seen.

If you're a fan of Bill Simmons' excellent "B.S. Report" podcast (and if you aren't...why aren't you?), you may have heard Steve Kerr discussing the Celtics last week. Kerr mentioned that Boston shoots a high percentage and has a high number of assists, but is amongst the bottom of the league in points. The theory is that they simply get torched in transition and fail to record easy buckets.

I'm inclined to agree with that notion, as nobody on the Celtics is a fast break threat other than Rondo, and old legs don't make you any better at defending the fast break, either. There's no way the rickety old Celtics can hang with young athletic East teams like Miami and Chicago in a playoff series. Just when we need Boston to play well for a few years to slow down LeHeat, they melt faster than a snowman in July. Go figure.

Up next: at New York Knicks, Wednesday, 2/29, 7:30