

## The Notebook: Sixers 103, Cavs 85

Written by {ga=mrburns}

Tuesday, March 27 2012 10:35 PM - Last Updated Wednesday, March 28 2012 11:41 AM

---



### The Game in 300 words or less

I don't want to suggest that this season is going to end as unceremoniously as the last one, but right now it's not looking good. Of course, just having Kyrie Irving out of the court makes any game this season much more palatable than last, but that doesn't change the fact that the Cavs looked awfully rudderless as they fell for the fourth straight contest.

This wasn't a heartbreaker and it certainly didn't seem like anyone quit out there; it was just a case of playing a road game against a better team that's zeroing in on a playoff spot.

The game was never really in doubt as the Sixers built a lead early, took a double-digit advantage into the half, and cruised through the second half.

It probably isn't a stretch to say that Byron Scott is disappointed in the Cavs' defense, which allowed the Sixers to shoot almost 50% from the field, and over 50% from beyond the arc. Jodie Meeks was the biggest villain, bombing the Cavs for 7 of the Sixers' 10 three-pointers. The Cavs weren't really able to slow anyone down except Louis Williams, who likely just had a cold shooting night.

## **The Notebook: Sixers 103, Cavs 85**

Written by {ga=mrburns}

Tuesday, March 27 2012 10:35 PM - Last Updated Wednesday, March 28 2012 11:41 AM

---

Interior defense is one thing – although it shouldn't be an excuse, just getting Anderson Varejao back solves a big chunk of that – but the Cavs need to get better at defending the wings.

It is difficult for the Cavs to win if both Antawn Jamison and Kyrie Irving don't score in the 20s, and it's almost impossible when the two key scorers both have lousy shooting nights. Anthony Parker and Tristan Thompson both had nice games.

### **Irving Watch**

It was a tough game for Kyrie, who shot just 4-of-13 from the field and turned the ball over 5 times. If he hadn't dished out 7 assists and made 3-of-7 three-pointers, it would have been a really awful game for the rookie.

I mentioned the Cavs' perimeter defense a little earlier, and a key part of that moving forward will be the development of Kyrie Irving. Kyrie definitely takes some possessions off on defense and that's the biggest area where he needs to improve. Maturity and just gaining more experience at the NBA level will help that, and it will also help if the Cavs can bring in another scorer so that they aren't totally reliant on Irving getting to the hoop to win games.

If you remember, LeBron James followed a similar path; James was a great offensive player from day one, and although he always possessed the skills to be a quality defender, it took some time for that to develop. Hopefully Irving follows a similar path, except, you know, the part about being an overgrown child that develops into an emotionally fragile Benedict Arnold.

### **About the Ramon Sessions trade**

## The Notebook: Sixers 103, Cavs 85

Written by {ga=mrburns}

Tuesday, March 27 2012 10:35 PM - Last Updated Wednesday, March 28 2012 11:41 AM

---

I haven't checked in since the Cavs dealt Ramon Sessions to the Lakers at the deadline, but I need to make a few points. There has been a schism (largely imaginary, in my opinion) between Cavs fans this year – those who favor winning some games this year and those who favor tanking for another high draft pick.

I fall in to the camp of enjoying wins, as many fans do. The “tank like crazy” crowd loves to jump all over anyone in this group. It really can't be overemphasized that painting people as short-sighted and impatient for having some fun when Kyrie Irving wins a game with a clutch fourth quarter performance is extraordinarily lame.

Any blowback from the Sessions trade is either completely imaginary or is coming from someone who didn't understand the details of Sessions' contract. The guy was not going to exercise his player option, so the Cavs flipped him for a first round pick instead of letting him walk for nothing. Everyone understands that, and also understands that the Cavs are trying to build more for the long-term than to make a run at a low playoff seed this season.

But that understanding doesn't make it cool to sit there hoping your favorite team loses every night. To do so is to place yourself in some bizarre, self-imposed sports hell, and it's something in which I have precisely zero interest.

The '11-'12 Cavs are not a good basketball team and will lose plenty of games on their own – there's no need to watch every night *hoping* for it, and making it difficult to enjoy both the few games they do win (not to mention Kyrie Irving's Rookie of the Year campaign.)

### About the 76ers

The Sixers were a .500 team last year and made the postseason as the seventh seed in the East. Although they lost to the Heat 4-1 in the first round, they didn't get embarrassed, and have

## The Notebook: Sixers 103, Cavs 85

Written by {ga=mrburns}

Tuesday, March 27 2012 10:35 PM - Last Updated Wednesday, March 28 2012 11:41 AM

---

taken a big step forward this season.

If the playoffs started today the Sixers would be the fourth seed and would face the Indiana Pacers. I would probably pick the Pacers in that series.

Philly has some good perimeter players like Andre Iguodala, Jrue Holiday, Thaddeus Young, and Louis Williams, but they aren't great inside. It will be interesting to see if this franchise can take the next step, because they don't really have an alpha dog (even if they're paying Andre Iguodala like one). As a playoff team, it will be difficult to find that guy in the draft.

Philadelphia's best chance to make a move and compete with perennial Eastern powers Chicago and Miami is probably just hope and pray that the light comes on for Evan Turner. The former Buckeye was one of the most dynamic college players I've ever seen, but he hasn't been able to find that same consistency in the NBA.

Maybe Turner just needs some time to settle in and mature, much like he did at Ohio State. If he isn't able to make a developmental leap, the Sixers will likely remain stuck in mediocrity; good enough to get into the playoffs each year, but not good enough to get out of the first or second round.

### Tristan Thompson settling in

Don't look now, but Tristan Thompson just might be starting to get a feel for the league. Thompson has shot above 50% in 3 of the last 5 games with two double-doubles, including a monster 27 point, 12 rebound performance against the Nets a couple of weeks ago.

First and foremost, Tristan needs to make his living with rebounding, defense, and garbage points. If he can just start there, he can average 10 and 10, and a couple of blocks per game as

## The Notebook: Sixers 103, Cavs 85

Written by {ga=mrburns}

Tuesday, March 27 2012 10:35 PM - Last Updated Wednesday, March 28 2012 11:41 AM

---

a starter.

If Thompson can become a better passer (read: don't just shoot every single time he touches the ball), keep developing that sneaky little hook shot along with one or two other post moves, he can become more than a solid starter.

It has been an up-and-down rookie year for the Texas product (shooting less than 44% for the season – abysmal for a power forward), but he's shown enough for us to know that he was worthy of the number four pick. Thompson could still become more JJ Hickson than Anderson Varejao, but he also has an extremely high ceiling.

**Up next: vs. Detroit Pistons, Wednesday, March 28, 7:00, FSN Ohio**