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As I drove home from last night's game, listening to the post game press conferences, you could just hear the frustration in the voices of Wizards coach Eddie Jordan and star player Gilbert Arenas. Nearly every game in the teams six game playoff series last season went right down to the wire, with the Cavs winning three games by one point .. including series ending overtime wins in games five and six. And once again last night, Washington had several chances to win the game late, but again came up short.

Fueled by what was one of the most electrifying atmospheres I've ever been a part of in a lifetime as a sports fan, the Cavs shot out to quick starts to the first and second halves. A furious third quarter rally pushed the Cavalier lead out to 67-56 at one point, but predictably, the Wizards fought back and the game was deadlocked as the game entered its final minute.

Coming up big down the stretch for the Cavs on this night was their Brazilian phenom Anderson Varejao, who played most of the fourth quarter in place of a largely ineffective Zydrunas Ilgauskas. In a whirlwind sequence, Varejao set a jarring pick to free LeBron James for a layup with 49 seconds left that gave the Cavs a lead they would not relinquish. Then

Varejao came up with a clutch steal on the other end as Antawn Jamison attempted to save a loose ball from going out of bounds. Finally, with six seconds left, Varejao grabbed a rebound of a Jarvis Hayes three pointer that would have put the Wizards up by one. Varejao made the second of two free throws, giving the Cavs a three point lead before Washington missed another three pointer at the buzzer that would have tied it.

Despite the late game heroics of Varejao, the star of the game was Larry Hughes, who had a phenomenal game at both ends of the floor against his old team. Hughes ended the night with 27 points on 11-15 shooting, grabbed 9 rebounds, dished out 5 assists, made 2 steals, and did not commit a turnover. Larry also played lockdown defense on Gilbert Arenas, who did not score a point until midway through the third quarter, and finished with just 7 points on 2-12 shooting. Hughes looked sharp, efficient, in great physical shape, and showed no effects whatsoever of the finger injury. He played like a man looking to prove his detractors wrong, and took a big first step towards doing that last night.

The Cavaliers could have and should have had this game in the bag well before the games final buzzer, but were plagued by turnovers and terrible free throw shooting all night. The Cavs committed 12 first half turnovers, which allowed Washington right back into the game after a quick start. And the Cavs shot just 15-30 from the free throw line, preventing them from lengthening leads on several occasions throughout the ball game.

In the end though, the Cavs were lifted by their late game execution and the performances of Hughes and LeBron James, who ended with 26, 10, and 5. Drew Gooden also played a very solid game at both ends, and had 14 points and 11 rebounds for the good guys. Zydrunas Ilgauskas continued his disappearing act versus Washington, making just 1-5 shots from the floor in 20 highly unproductive minutes at both ends.

The Cavs have a day of rest today before traveling to San Antonio for a Friday night game that will be seen on national television.