



Remember when Kyrie Irving started his NBA career by shooting 2/12 in a 104-96 loss to the Toronto Bobcats? Cleveland fans were ready to make a visit to the I-480 bridge and the small but vocal minority who wanted Derrick Williams and Brandon Knight were temporarily vindicated. Kyrie Irving obviously proved them wrong and he turned out to be better than expected.

The small amount of fans who opted to watch Summer League basketball instead of the season premier of Breaking Bad were treated to a sub-par performance from the newest Cavaliers guard. Dion Waiters took 11 shot and missed 8 of them. The fact that he missed shots was not that concerning. It was how he missed them. There were field goal attempts taken that lacked any rhythm and he missed in many different ways. Sometimes it was wide-right and other times it was way too short.

This is not to say that there weren't any positive things to take away from Dion Waiters' professional debut. He split multiple defenders and had an amazing basket in the paint in the second half. It is important for him to try and take advantage of that skill-set of his when his jump shot is not falling. Waiters also converted on a huge basket late in the fourth quarter that put the Cavs up 64-63 with 12.8 seconds left. The Cavs could not stop the Kemba Walker from scoring on the ensuing possession and things got weird after that. Down one and with the ball, Dion Waiters paid homage to Chris Weber and called a timeout that his team did not have. The officials called a technical and the Cavs lost by a final score of 68-64. Waiters finished with 10 points, 4 rebounds, 4 assists and 1 steal in 31:43 minutes of play.

Tyler Zeller had an effective debut for the Wine and Gold (14 points, 5 rebounds). His first basket was a hard throw-down off a Donald Sloan assist. Zeller also hit some tough jump shots. Most impressive was seeing how the team functioned when he was running the floor. When Byron Scott was hired by the Cavs, he promised that his team would get out in [transition](#) as often as possible. Instead, they were ranked 14th out of 30 in [pace](#) last season. With athletes like Kyrie Irving, Dion Waiters, Tristan Thompson and Tyler Zeller, the roster features personnel that is suited to run.

Perhaps the most impressive Cavalier was Samardo Samuels. He finished the game with 10 points, 4 rebounds and an emphatic block on Byron Mullens. What was most impressive about Samuels was not how he played during the game, but how much weight he has lost. There were [reports](#) that Samuels shed 17 pounds between the season and today, which seems unbelievable. It would be somewhat shocking if Samuels did not lose more weight than just 18 pounds. The leaner Samardo Samuels was more mobile and was clearly playing with more athleticism. He is not a perfect player, but he clearly worked hard during the off season and deserves strong consideration from the Cavaliers front office.

On the Charlotte side of things, Byron Mullens took a lot of shots (17) and didn't make that many of them (4). Kemba Walker did his best Byron Mullens impression by taking 14 shots and only making 2 of them. Considering how atrocious his field goal [percentage](#) was last year, it might be time for the Bobcats to begin worrying about their 9th overall pick.

This game was defined by the fact that Kyrie Irving and Michael Kidd-Gilchrist did not play. Kyrie Irving is out for 6-8 weeks after fracturing his hand after punching a not-so-padded wall following a frustrating turnover during practice. As irritating as it is for Cavs fans to not be able to see the new Cavaliers back court for the first time, it is almost a blessing in disguise that Irving is not playing. A fractured hand is an injury that is easy to recover from and he should be ready for training camp in late September. It could be a lot worse. Kidd-Gilchrist did not play because he injured his left knee in his Summer League debut.

The Bobcats and Cavs did not play a beautiful brand of basketball. Charlotte won the game despite shooting 30.7% partly due to the 21 turnovers committed by the Cavs. These games do not matter in the least. What is most important is that the players stay healthy. Secondary to that is that the players work on their on-the-court chemistry and for the fans to get to see young athletes trying to make their mark.

The Cavs play the NBA D-League Select team tomorrow at 8:00 EST on Monday night. The game will only be broadcast on the NBA Summer League Broadband package which is [available](#) for purchase for \$4.99.