

Good Basketball in Cleveland? The Cleveland State Vikings Are 10-0

Written by {ga=neoleo}

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There's a basketball team in Cleveland that cares, plays hard, and is actually good. And none of their players will leave via free agency in the off-season or joke around with the most hated rival on the sideline. They won't quit and they won't leave you disappointed in their play.

They're the CSU Vikings and they're 10-0.

Just as the Cavaliers were ripping out the hearts of Clevelanders, again, the hot-shooting Vikings were sweeping the first round of Horizon League games this weekend in Wisconsin by hammering both Green Bay (83-75) and Milwaukee (82-59). The Vikings had not won in Wisconsin under Gary Waters, having last won in Green Bay in 2005-06 and Milwaukee all the way back in 1999-00.

Waters called this week "Revenge Week" as the Vikes took on four teams that defeated them last year and CSU made it a perfect sweep taking down St. Bonaventure, Robert Morris and the two Wisconsin foes.

This year's version of the Vikings are as determined and focused as ever. Senior leader Norris Cole is a man on a mission and is the early favorite to claim the Horizon League Player of the Year Award. Cole leads the league in scoring, by far, at 21.2 per game. He also pulls down 4.9 rebounds, dishes out 4.3 assists and gets his hands on league-leading 2.3 steals per game.

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The Dayton Dunbar product is the same type of play-maker that Cedric Jackson was for the Vikings, but he shoots it better than the former Cavalier. Cole is shooting 45-percent from the floor, 35-percent from three and 85-percent from the line. Cole is so adept at getting to the line, he leads the league in free throws made and attempted, and he has 34 more attempts than the next closest player.

On top of all the stats, Cole leads the nation in [left handed dunks over seven-foot centers](#) .

To put it short, Cole, and the rest of his Vikings teammates, are good. And it's time for Cleveland to take notice.

It's not like the Cavaliers are going to keep your interest this winter.

I'm a lifelong Cavaliers fan. Although I'm old enough to remember watching the Price-era Cavs and I suffered through the 23-seconds-and-miss offense of Mike Fratello, it was the powerhouse Randy Wittman/John Lucas era that really got me hooked.



I've supported Bobby Sura, Chris Mills, Ryan Pack, Cedric Henderson, Darius Miles and Trajon Langdon. I actually thought that Smush Parker would turn into a legit NBA point guard and return us to our rightful place as the perpetual eighth seed in the Eastern Conference.

All of that boyhood hope is now gone when it comes to the Cavaliers. I've been disappointed one too many times.

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I feel like I caught my wife cheating on me, only to give her a second chance. And then she cheated on me again with my best friend and took pictures to prove it. And then showed up on my front door arm in arm with my former best friend to show me the pictures.

After this week's transgressions, it will be a very long time before these eyes witness another Cavaliers game.

I don't know about you Cleveland, but I plan on spending my extra time at the Wolstein Center.

These Vikings are the antithesis of the Cavs. They play tough D by leading the Horizon in steals per game (8.3) and forced turnovers (16.3) while holding opponents to 36-percent shooting and 27-percent from beyond the arc.

And they can shoot it. They shoot 36-percent from downtown as a team with five players shooting better than 33-percent. Last year's record-setting three point shooter, Jeremy Montgomery, got off to a slow start and is only shooting 30-percent on the year, but he's 6-9 from three in the past two games.

In those same two games, the Vikings shot a combined 59-percent from the floor (51-87) and an astounding 67-percent from three (24-36).

With the way the Vikings play defense, they will be in every game. Waters is on record as saying they can beat anybody in the country if they just shoot over 40-percent. When the Vikings hit for over 50-percent like they did this week, they blow out the competition.

The Vikings are back home for a tune-up game this week against DII West Virginia Tech before another tough road trip to Sam Houston State and West Virginia.

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CSU returns home for a game against South Florida of the Big East on December 22 before conference play resumes at home against Loyola and Illinois-Chicago on December 30 and January 1.

I'll be there Cleveland. Will you?