

As sports fans, we love to analyze things. We love to number-crunch, pick apart matchups, weight advantages against disadvantages. But there are some times where all you can do is just sit back, watch and marvel at a spectacle of sheer, God-given athletic talent. LeBron James provided us with such a moment in Game 5 of the Eastern Conference Finals at the Palace of Auburn Hills. Erik Cassano's countdown of the year's top Cleveland sports moments continues ....



[10.&nbsp;Mighty Casey Buries The Tigers](#)

[9.&nbsp;Cavs Clinch The #2 Seed](#)

[8.&nbsp;Trot Haunts BoSox in ALCS Thriller](#)

[7.&nbsp;Dawson's Lucky Bounce](#)

[6.&nbsp;Frye Trade, Anderson Promotion Turn The Browns Around](#)

[5.&nbsp;C.C. Sabathia Wins The AL Cy Young Award](#)

#### **4. LeBron's game for the ages stifles Pistons**

*May 31*

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With the rest of the roster confounded by the Pistons' battle-tested defense, LeBron took matters into his own hands in the waning moments of regulation.

The Pistons had a seven-point lead with a little more than three minutes to play. With the series tied 2-2, it appeared Detroit was headed for a closeout Game 6 in Cleveland, but LeBron proceeded to run off 29 of the Cavs' final 30 points, including their last 25 in a row.

To perform like that against any team would be impressive. To perform like that against the Pistons, an elite defensive team competing in their fifth straight conference finals, is downright head-smacking.

LeBron beat the Pistons inside and outside, hitting rainbow jumper after rainbow jumper, and powering into the paint when he wasn't hoisting from the perimeter. When the dust settled, LeBron had scored 48 points, 32 more points than the Cavs' second-leading scorer, Zydrunas Ilgauskas, and 22 more than Rip Hamilton, the Pistons' leading scorer.

The Cavaliers needed 47 of the 48 to win, beating Detroit 109-107 in two overtimes, and dragging the demoralized Pistons back to Cleveland for the Game 6 clincher.

After the game, LeBron was admittedly exhausted, and wasn't really the same for the remainder of the playoffs (though some of that likely had to do with San Antonio's superb defense in the NBA Finals).

That game was LeBron's coronation as an elite postseason pressure performer, and it turned the Cavs from an overrated also-ran with a cushy-soft playoff path to a serious conference title threat.