

Delonte for three!!! Cavs lead 3-1. The Indians take the first two of three against the Bankees to rattle off a 5-1 week and the starting pitching looks scary good, even without Jake. And Phil Savage struck again this weekend, trading up twice into the fourth round to land a couple guys he feels were second or third round talent. All in all, a pretty darn good sports weekend in CTown. Peeker checks in with The Weekend Wrap.



## Service Broken

They say nothing odd has happened in a playoff series until the home team loses a ballgame.

You can hereby declare the Cavs-Wizards series quite odd. Not only because the Cavs did take Game 4 on the road to grab a 3-1 series lead but also because the Wizards continue to try and play the part of a bully even though they fit the 98 pound weakling role so much better.

The Cavs stuck to their knitting on Sunday afternoon in Washington, keeping the game close through 45 minutes and then allowing LeBron James to lead the way to a 100-97 win over the Wizards in a huge

swing game in this first round Eastern Conference match up. James scored 32 points but his biggest contribution down the stretch was drawing a double team on a drive down the lane and then dishing to a wide open Delonte West who buried a 3-pointer and the Wizards with 5 seconds remaining in the ballgame.

West was outstanding on Sunday. The D.C native scored 21 points on 7/12 shooting and was 5/8 from behind the arc with each successive 3-pointer being bigger than the one before it. In fact, the 3-ball kept the Cavs in the ballgame throughout the afternoon. The Cavs were 13/28 from behind the arc. They overcame an 8 point deficit in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter with 3-point shots, built themselves a big 15 point third quarter lead with the 3-point shot and then won the ballgame with the 3-point shot. Daniel Gibson was also 4/7 from 3-point range for all 12 of his points and James knocked down three 3's himself.

The Wizards will pose, preen, parade and talk the good talk about coming back and winning this series. In part because that's what you have to do and in part because the Wizards are comfortable posing and lying to themselves. But this one hurt them deeply. They kept James in check in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter and overcame that big 3  
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quarter deficit to put themselves in position to win a huge game. Then they got beat by a cast of Cavaliers they weren't worried about.

They have no one to blame but themselves though. For as big, bad and tough as they claim to be, the Cavaliers fully kicked their glass Sunday afternoon. The alleged biggest and baddest ballers on the block should be asking how such a physically dominant and tough team like they are could possibly be out-rebounded 51-31 in a critical playoff ballgame. I don't recall the truly tough, imposing and intimidating teams throughout NBA history giving up nearly 20 offensive rebounds and allowing what seemed like 40 second chance points.

While they're in a ponderous mood the Wizards might also want to ask when their leader, Gilbert Arenas, might have a FG% higher than his body fat %. In looking at the pudgy Arenas and then at his 14/36 effort from the floor in the series thus far, Gilbert's going to have to go off in Game 5 on Wednesday night at 'The Q' to even get close.

## **Back in the Saddle**

A week ago today we were wondering what had

become of the defending AL Central champion Cleveland Indians. They had just been beaten by the Minnesota Twins, losing two of three to a below average Minnesota squad and scored just 4 runs in that weekend series. Sitting at 7-12 and with their ace, defending CY Young winner CC Sabathia sporting an ERA approaching Gilbert Arenas's FG%, things were not looking good for the good guys.

Thank God for the Kansas City Royals.

The Indian went into KC and swept the Royals, getting a terrific outing from Sabathia and an even better performance from the suddenly unhittable Cliff Lee. The bats came alive a bit and the Indians capitalized on the momentum built in Kansas City to take the first two games of their weekend series with the Yankees. Despite a 1-0 loss on Sunday with Sabathia on the mound to a dominant Chien-Ming Wang and Mariano Rivera, the Indians

played themselves back toward the front of the AL Central division.

A 5-1 week will do wonders for your confidence in a ball club. The fact that it included a couple of terrific outings from Sabathia makes it even better.

Still, there's some room for improvement. Maybe not so much in improving on a 5-1 week, but individually there are still guys scuffling. Rather than worry about what's eating Sabathia we can now safely turn our attention to imploring guy like Travis Hafner and Jason Michaels to get on track. Hafner is still feeling his way along, hitting some balls hard and looking clueless at other times. Michaels has never gotten it going and is running out of opportunities. In fact, only the sprained ankle suffered by Grady Sizemore may be keeping Michaels on the roster right now. J-Mike needs to get something going quickly if he's going to remain with this club. Otherwise, I can see a DFA next to his name in the

agate type of the transaction section relatively soon. If not a DFA then a strained hamstring or lower back injury requiring a stint on the DL may be in Michaels' future. That would allow Michaels a couple weeks to clear his head and get himself together before it's entirely too late.

## **Not Sitting Still**

With each Saturday pick made by Baltimore, Pittsburgh and Cincinnati during the NFL draft this past weekend you could easily understand why early round draft picks are coveted by NFL general managers. Watching the Browns' AFC rivals seek to improve themselves in the first couple rounds while the Browns waited until round number 4 to make their first selection was frustrating. It was like having to sit out the first 3 laps of a 7 lap race.

But the Browns did ultimately make a couple deals to get up the draft board in the 4<sup>th</sup> round to select a couple players who will fill some needs. Beau Bell is an inside linebacker from UNLV that the Browns took with the 5

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pick in the 4

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round. Bell is reputed to be tough, aggressive and relentless with good tackling skills and solid coverage skills. With Andra Davis coming off a down year Bell will likely compete in camp for some time at one of the inside LB positions.

The Browns also moved up again in the 4<sup>th</sup> round (12

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pick of the round) to select Missouri TE Martin Rucker. Rucker is likely a depth pick given the always uncertain health of Kellen

Winslow Jr.. Maybe more so given the news that backup TE Steve Heiden also recently underwent a surgical procedure on his back.

Rucker was described in some circles as an oversized wide receiver who's much more accomplished in the passing game than as a blocker. He apparently will be asked to bulk up a bit from his listed weight of 250lbs but is noted to be a fluid receiver with good speed and good hands. Sounds like another weapon to employ to allow the Browns to spread the field and create favorable match-ups for their bevy of skill players.

Defensive end Ahtyba Rubin from Iowa State, WR Paul Hubbard from Wisconsin and DE Alex Hall completed the 2008 draft for the Browns.