

The 2007-2008 season got off to a very lackluster start for the Cavaliers, who were beset by injuries and holdouts from Sasha Pavlovic and Anderson Varejao. Then, in February, GM Danny Ferry decided to act, shipping out six players, and bringing in four new ones in a massive mid-season three team deal with Chicago and Seattle. The trade has payed major dividends for the Cavs ever since. And it checks in at #2 in Erik Cassano's countdown of the Top Ten 2008 Cleveland Sports Moments.



Author's note: As an act to follow, 2007 was pretty tough. An NBA Finals appearance by the Cavs, an ALCS appearance by the Indians, a 10-6 Browns team that narrowly missed the playoffs and C.C. Sabathia winning the Indians' first Cy Young Award since 1972.

The sports year 2008 was bound to pale by comparison for Cleveland fans. On many levels it did. The Indians stumbled out of the gate in April. Injuries and a dud of a bullpen rendered the season a lost cause by midsummer, at which point Sabathia and Casey Blake were shipped off in a mini-fire sale reminiscent of 2006.

The Cavs followed up their Finals appearance with a season marred by holdouts, injuries and upheaval, as half the roster was reconstructed at the trading deadline. The '07-'08 season came to an end with a Game 7, second round loss to the Celtics.

The Browns were the most disappointing team of all. A season that began with so much promise will end with the entire organization on the fast track to another

smack of the reset button.

But 2008 did manage to make its own sports headlines in Cleveland, and believe it or not, a number of them were positive. Over the coming days, our top 10 Cleveland sports moments will be revealed here on the front page of The Cleveland Fan. We hope you enjoy reliving them.

[*The Top Ten 2008 Cleveland Sports Moments: #10 - #7*](#)

[*The Top Ten 2008 Cleveland Sports Moments: #6 - #4*](#)

[*The Top Ten 2008 Cleveland Sports Moments: #3 Cavs Romp To Franchise Best Start*](#)

2. Cavs' February blockbuster

February 21

There is no real blueprint for rebuilding an NBA roster in the middle of the season, even though a number of teams have attempted it over the years. But rebuilding a roster at the trading deadline while attempting to appease your franchise player and remain in contention for an NBA title?

Danny Ferry was writing a new book in February. That's when the Cavs GM scuttled the repeated attempts to turn a roster featuring Larry Hughes, Drew Gooden, Ira Newble and Donyell Marshall into a supporting cast worthy of LeBron.

Ferry came to the correct conclusion that the roster as constructed at the time wasn't good enough to win an NBA championship. A game for the ages from LeBron and a hot-shooting night from Daniel Gibson propelled the Cavs to the NBA Finals in 2007, but once there, the Spurs put the overmatched Cavs and their exhausted superstar in their place with a four-game sweep.

In February, Ferry reached a confluence of favorable circumstances, and decided that the timing wasn't going to get any better. The Bulls were unhappy with an overpaid, underproductive Ben Wallace. The Sonics were looking to unload Wally Szczerbiak's massive contract in preparation for what would turn out to be a relocation to Oklahoma City. The Sonics coupled Szczerbiak with Delonte West and the Bulls threw Joe Smith in with Wallace, and the deal was sealed.

In the trade, Ferry jettisoned Hughes, Gooden, Shannon Brown and Cedric Simmons to Chicago, Newble and Marshall to Seattle. Six players out, four in, and the Cavs entered a transitional period.

The remade Cavs roster was slow to show any improvement over the previous version. The inconsistent Cavs trudged through the remainder of the season with a 15-13 post-trade record (14-13 if you exclude a Feb. 22 win over Washington in which none of the new players were available). The new-look Cavs knocked the Wizards out of the playoffs in Round 1, and proceeded to lose to the Celtics in the second round in seven games. It's hard to imagine the previous version of the roster would have fared much better, or much worse.

By summertime, the trade had been denounced by Cavs fans everywhere as much ado about nothing. That is, until August, when Smith was packaged with Damon Jones in a deal that landed Mo Williams in Cleveland. Williams, West and Wallace comprise three-fifths of the current Cavs starting lineup, with Szczerbiak as a key bench reserve who also happens to possess an expiring contract worth more than \$13 million - a bargaining chip that could land the Cavs another major player between now and this season's trading deadline.

Not only was last February's deal a defining moment for the Cavs franchise, it has been a gift that has kept on giving - and could keep on giving into next year.