While the reaction from the majority of Cavaliers fans on this weeks big trade has been mostly positive, not everyone is lock step in those thoughts. The Chicago papers have been flooded with columns making the case that the Bulls fleeced the Cavs into taking a washed up player with one of the worst contracts in the league. And some Cavs fans feel this deal has not addressed the most important liability on the team, the point guard spot. In his latest, Nick Allburn debunks the naysayers with retorts to those arguments.

When I first learned of the mega deal that Danny Ferry and the Cavs had swung, I was completely and utterly shocked. Shocked: both that the Cavs were able to unload their resident albatross, Larry Hughes, and that they were able to add some quality pieces in the process. I wasn't thrilled with the trade, but I was certainly pleased. The Cavaliers are probably still a few key guys away from having a championship club, but this deal appears to bring them closer to that ultimate goal.

Much to my surprise, the reviews of this trade among fans and talking heads, *err*, media members, have been extremely mixed. Skip Bayless, the man who is most directly responsible for my penchant for yelling at my television set, didn't think that this trade improves the Cavaliers. Bayless also called Larry Hughes one of the league's most underrated players, declared that LeBron James'' triple-double on Tuesday night was a "D-minus performance," and has taken to using the moniker "Prince James" when referring to LBJ, as if to suggest that James is all hype. Excuse me if I consider Bayless' credibility completely shot; I don't trust this fellow''s opinion on anything from basketball to badminton.

As far as I'm concerned, opinions from the majority of non-Cleveland sports writers on this deal are pure codswallop; most of these folks simply don't watch very much Cleveland basketball. I'm more concerned with what someone who knows the team, like Terry Pluto (otherwise known as the only readable Cavs writer at the Plain Dealer) has to say, and Pluto thinks that the trade improves the team.

But many fans don't like the deal. In fact, the doubters might not be the minority at this point. The trade's skeptics have been spewing out various declarations, many of which are both unsubstantiated and ill-informed, as to why Danny Ferry shouldn't have pulled the trigger on this deal. Never mind that most of these whiners are probably the same ladies and gentlemen who were clamoring for Ferry to do something (*anything!*) in the days leading up to the deadline, because it's not the issue here. The topic at hand centers around a variety of assertions about the trade, which are primarily fiction. Let's get to it.

"Ferry didn't get a point guard!"

On paper, that's true; the Cavs didn't acquire a pure point guard. On the other hand, the only ball handler that Ferry traded away was Larry Hughes, who was an average shooting guard masquerading as a point guard. Hughes, the king of the boneheaded turnover, was not much more than an average ball handler by point guard standards, and by the same standard was a below average distributor.

Delonte West is a good basketball player when he can stay healthy, and he should fit in with the Cavaliers better than Hughes did. West is a better ball handler than Hughes, and while he isn't a pure point guard (he's more of a combo guard), he's closer than Hughes ever will be. Unlike Hughes, West isn''t a chucker. In other words, say goodbye to Hughes' 12 shots per game at a 37.7 percent clip (34.1 percent from downtown). West's also a better spot up shooter than Hughes, and he can nail the stroke the three at about 40 percent.

Furthermore, why does everyone insist that the Cavaliers need a traditional point guard? Sure, having a Jason Kidd looks great on paper, but Kidd's a guy who absolutely dominates the basketball. LeBron James is one of the league's finest passers, and whenever he's passing the ball or driving, good things happen for the Cavs. Clearly, you need someone to take the heat off of LeBron from time to time and prevent the opposition from constantly trapping him, and West is certainly good enough to do that. As long as LeBron's on this team, they won''t need a stereotypical point guard to be successful, and to think that they will is an example of uncreative thinking.

"Larry Hughes was healthy and playing good basketball!"

Yep, and that's why Danny Ferry was brilliant to sell high on Leapin' Larry. In ten full NBA seasons, Larry Hughes has played 70-plus games only twice, but he's played 50 or fewer games five times. Translation: Hughes is really, really, ridiculously injury-prone. Hughes makes Lee Suggs look like Lou Gehrig.

Granted, Hughes' scoring was up in February; he'd averaged 19 points per game for the month. However, he was still shooting just a hair above 43 percent in February, during what was easily his best three weeks wearing wine and gold. Hughes is a 41 percent career shooter, and a 29.6 percent career three point shooter. During his two full seasons in Cleveland, he shot only 40.9 and 40 percent, respectively. He had the ability to short-circuit possessions with a single ill-advised jumper from a foot inside the three point line.

Larry Hughes has never scored with any regular efficiency or volume in Cleveland, and he''s taken countless lousy, miserable shots. The smart money says that Hughes'' February was an aberration - a mere peak on the graph - and that sooner or later (probably sooner) " I heart strippers
(and bad jumpers)" Larry would reemerge. Danny Ferry did what any savvy businessman does; he sold high on a volatile, overvalued asset.

"Ben Wallace is washed up!"

I disagree. Wallace probably isn't the same player he was in Detroit, but he still has some petrol left in the tank.

The guy is still jacked and in great shape, and he hasn't suffered any major injuries while playing for the Bulls, so something else must have been wrong in Chicago. Of course, Wallace didn't always get along with now ex-Bulls coach Scott Skiles; their much-publicized and exceedingly silly feud over Wallace’s headband
being the best example.

But the bigger problem lied with what the Bulls were asking of Wallace. Chicago signed Wallace to a 4-year, $60 million contract, hoping that he would be the low post scorer they'd coveted for years. Unfortunately, it was a drastic miscalculation of Wallace's skill set on Chicago's part, and for over a season and a half Wallace has been one of the most misused and disappointing players in the NBA.

Ben Wallace is not a low post scorer, nor is he a true center. Wallace needs to be teamed with another quality big man, and it's no secret that Chicago was never able to land that player. Big Ben was outstanding during his six years in Detroit, especially after the Pistons traded for Rasheed Wallace in 2004. Rasheed Wallace is a big man who can stretch the floor. Does Sheed remind you of anyone who plays in Cleveland?

Assuming that Wallace starts, and that seems a virtual certainty, Zydrunas Ilgauskas will likely complement him far better than anyone in Chicago ever did. Wallace might not be able to return to his Detroit form, but he will be vastly superior to his Chicago version. Consider that Wallace, one of the league's best interior defenders, will be replacing Drew Gooden, who was an invisible man on defense. At least from a defensive perspective, swapping Gooden for Wallace is an incredible upgrade.

"Wally Szczerbiak can't replace Larry Hughes' scoring!"

This season Szczerbiak is averaging 13.1 points in about 24 minutes per game, shooting 46 percent from the field and 42.8 percent from three. Hughes was averaging 12.3 points in 30 minutes per game, shooting 37.7 percent from the field and 34.1

percent from three. Any questions?

“Drew Gooden was one of the Cavs’ best players, and a damn good rebounder!”

After Carlos Boozer duped Jim Paxson into tearing up his contract, I became a huge Drew Gooden fan, mostly because he was a serviceable option at the four and the Cavs were very fortunate that Orlando was selling surplus power forwards on the cheap. But Gooden’s performance has dipped during his last two seasons in Cleveland. Take a look at some of Gooden’s stats from his three and a half seasons in the Forest City.

‘04-‘05: 14.4 PPG, 9.2 RPG, 49.2 FG%

‘05-‘06: 10.7 PPG, 8.4 RPG, 51.2 FG%

‘06-‘07: 11.1 PPG, 8.5 RPG, 47.3 FG%

‘07-‘08: 11.3 PPG, 8.3 RPG, 44.4 FG%

While Gooden’s never been able to develop into a premier scorer, namely that all-important second option to LeBron, at least his rebounding numbers have been consistent. That said, Gooden’s scoring has become alarmingly less efficient in over the last two seasons, with his shooting percentage dropping by almost seven full points. Power forwards and centers need to shoot in at least the high 40s, and don’t think for a second that Danny Ferry was unaware of the diminishing returns that the Cavs were receiving from Gooden.

It's not all that complex, really. Gooden has fallen more and more in love with his jump shot over the last few years, choosing to make the eight to twelve foot baseline jumper his bread and butter. While Gooden is a pretty good jump shooter for a power forward, you don't want the majority of your power forward's shots to be midrange baseline jumpers.

To be honest, Gooden's affinity for his jump shot is a microcosm of his perennial underachievement. Drew Gooden is a very talented player, but he's never going to be a star in the NBA because he's not a very smart player. How many times has Gooden let his temper get the best of him in recent years, causing him to play carelessly for the next several possessions? Moreover, Gooden's defense has never shown any marked improvement during his three-plus seasons in Cleveland. Considering the importance that Mike Brown places on defense, that tells you something about Gooden.

Here''s the bottom line: the Cavs unloaded an underachieving, jump shooting power forward who was a solid if unspectacular rebounder, and a defensive liability. I can live with that.

"Ferry just traded one bad contract for another!"

Unfortunately, that's the nature of the beast when it comes to NBA trades. Teams are constantly trying to get under the cap and rid themselves of bad contracts (i.e. Hughes, Wallace). The Bulls and Cavs were both over the salary cap prior to the trade's consummation, so neither team could receive more than 125 percent plus $100,000 of the salaries they traded away in return. In other words, if you're over the cap, you can't keep loading up on big contracts without trading away a contract of approximate equality. That's the reason why the Cavs couldn't trade Hughes for a box of

fresh Wyoming air. For more details about the NBA's unnecessarily complex salary cap rules, check here.

"Trading six players is too much turnover!"

True, trading that many players this late in the season is uncommon but the majority of the players Danny Ferry traded away were not key components of Mike Brown's rotation. Obviously Drew Gooden and Larry Hughes were starters, but Shannon Brown, Donyell Marshall, and Cedric Simmons have all either been injured, riding the pine, or have spent most of the season sitting on the bench is street clothes. Ira Newble was starting at the time of the trade, but that was merely through necessity due to various team injuries. There's

a reason that Ira Newble had been buried on the bench for the better part of three seasons: he's not very good.

The challenge will now be for Mike Brown to integrate the four new Cavaliers into the existing system. While that will be difficult, the trade undoubtedly makes the Cavs a more talented bunch, and finding spots for talented players to play is an awfully nice problem to have.

"Hughes' departure leaves the Cavs' perimeter defense vulnerable!"

This is one fact that I'm willing to concede.

Cleveland's perimeter defense will suffer without Hughes. But although Hughes may have been the Cavs' best perimeter defender, but he still was not a lockdown defender in the mould of Ron Artest or Bruce Bowen. While that doesn't change the fact that Hughes' exodus definitely weakens the Cavs' perimeter defense, that might be more than offset by the degree to which Ben Wallace will upgrade the interior defense.

Add to that the development of LeBron James as a defender, and the fact that Delonte West is no defensive slouch himself (though Judge Smails is a tremendous slouch), and I'll take my chances dumping Hughes and his rim-bending jumpers. Hughes is a good defender, but the Cavs have overrated his defense from day one to justify his signing. It was a total joke when Hughes was named First

Team All-NBA Defense after the ‘04-‘05 season. Hughes is a good defender, but he’’s extremely replaceable.

“What’s going to happen to all of the ‘Loudville’ section names?!”

That’’s a good question, and it’s definitely going to be a rough transition. Gone are “Drew’s Crew,” “Shannon’s Shooting Stars,” “‘Yell’s Angel’s,” “Ira’s Newblehood,” “Boog’s Bunch” (has anyone ever heard of Hughes being called “Boog?””), and “Justin’s Wing” (Justin is Hughes’ deceased younger brother).

Some suggestions: “Ben’s (Corn)Rows,” “Wild

Wild West,"" "Joe's Shmoes," and the fairly obvious "Wally World." It won''t be the same without "Ira's Newblehood," but I have a feeling that somehow, the fans at The Q will get by.