LeBron Takes Over Late, Ending Orlando Comeback

The Cavaliers started the second half out on the right foot last night, defeating the Orlando Magic by a count of 105-92 before a sold out crowd at The Q on Anderson Varejao wig night. The loss was the seventh straight for the Magic, and eleventh in their last twelve games. The win lifted the Cavs record to 32-21, the first time the franchise has been more than ten games over .500 since the Mike Fratello days.

LeBron James picked up right where he left off Sunday night in Houston, where he became the youngest player in NBA history to win the All-Star game MVP award. James finished with 26 points and 9 rebounds, and elicited chants of “M-V-P” from the raucous crowd at The Q, many of whom were adorned with floppy hair wigs.

LeBron got off to a cold start shooting the ball, and seemed more content early getting his teammates involved. But as we have seen all season, LeBron brought his game to a new level in the second half, scoring six straight points late to kill an Orlando rally that had cut the Cavs lead to 97-90. LeBron also had several highlight reel passes on the evening, including a couple behind the back jobbies to Drew Gooden that drew ooh’s and aah’s from the Cleveland faithful, and ended in Gooden rim-rocking dunks.

James had plenty of help on the night from his other mates in the Cavs starting lineup. Sasha Pavlovic went for a career high 21 points on 7-13 shooting, and also added 5 rebounds and 3 assists. Gooden and Zydrunas Ilgauskas combined for 40 points and 24 rebounds, doing it against one of the league's top interior duos of Dwight Howard and Tony Battie. Gooden and Z played great on both ends all evening, and both looked refreshed and recharged for a second half that will depend greatly on how proficient these two can be.

The Cavs played smart and efficient all evening, shooting 52% from the floor and committing just seven turnovers on the evening. Eric Snow, the league leader in assist-to-turnover ratio, had 7 assists and just one turnover, and did a great job setting things up all night for his teammates. Damon Jones added 3 assists and 0 turnovers off the bench, and amazingly launched only one shot in 21 minutes of action. Jones has been much more willing to drive or dish the ball over the last month, after shooting every time he touched the ball during the team's first 30 games.

The Cavs get right back at it tonight, playing in Philadelphia against Allen Iverson and the Sixers at 7 PM.