A lot of people seem to think that Kyrie Irving and Dion Waiters are the “exciting young cornerstones” of the current Cavalier roster. But for those of us who’ve been clamoring maniacally for more Jeremy Pargo and Omri Casspi, tonight was our night! Yes, the Cavs may have suffered an 89-79 defeat to the lowly Pistons (6-13) in a game devoid of meaningful ramifications, but no glowing numbers on a scoreboard were gonna rain on our parade.

It was just a few years back that Pargo and Casspi were plying their trades for Maccabi Tel Aviv of the Euro League (as if we need be reminded!). Now here they were—both in uniform and actually *starting* for the NBA’s 25th best basketball team on an electric Monday night in early December. So, with the usual starting backcourt of Irving (finger) and Waiters (ankle) on the shelf, did the Tel Aviv Tandem take the proverbial ball and run with it? Well, not exactly. Pargo (4-for-13) and Casspi (4-for-11) shot a combined 33% from the field for the night. But on the bright side, that simply brought them in line with the rest of the Cavaliers roster, as Cleveland shot a respectfully pedestrian 34% as a team, including a tasteful 3-of-20 (15%) from beyond the arc.

Give credit where it’s due. The Pistons have leap-frogged the Cavaliers (4-14) in the Central Division basement in recent weeks by playing some pretty sound defense (Detroit ranks 12th in the league in points allowed per game and has won 5 straight at home). Still, one cannot help but marvel at the collective effort (or lack thereof) put forth by Cleveland’s makeshift lineup of ball-chuckers tonight. Coming off a genuinely gutsy performance in a double-overtime loss to Portland on Saturday, the Cavs never led after the 9:41 mark of the first quarter tonight. And everyone contributed to this contemporary art installation we’ll call “When the Bricks Came Down at The Palace (of Auburn Hills)."

Tristan Thompson: 4-for-13. Alonzo Gee: 2-for-10. Boobie Gibson: 1-for-6. Even the Cavs' resident folk hero Anderson Varejao had to clank his fair share of bunnies (7-of-18) to reach his now increasingly "normal" line of 17 points and 18 rebounds. Outside of Andy, no other Cav eclipsed 10 points. Thompson did manage a double-double with 10 and 11, and Pargo tossed in 8 assists with his 10-point effort, but with Detroit out to a 56-39 lead by halftime, the bright spots were few and far between.

Brandon Knight led the way for the Pistons with 17 points, 5 assists, and 5 rebounds. Kyle Singler and Tayshaun Prince (yes he is STILL in Detroit) added 15 a piece, and Detroit's quietly solid center Greg Monroe battled Varejao to grab 14 rebounds of his own, to go with 9 points (he's averaging 16 ppg for the season).

Trailing by as much as 21 in the third quarter, the Cavaliers started chipping away at a glacier's pace, eventually cutting the deficit to a manageable 12 when Tyler Zeller (8 pts and 4 rbs off the bench) and Rodney Stuckey exchanged jumpers in the final seconds of the third period, making it 75-63.

The Cavs rode that momentum into the fourth quarter by failing to score for the first four minutes of the frame. Even so, Detroit wasn't exactly willing to run away with it, either. After extending the lead to 16, the Pistons fell into a dry spell of their own, allowing Cleveland to pull within 7 on a Varejao layup with 3:31 left to play. Andy added a pair of free throws shortly thereafter, making it an 85-79 Piston lead with 1:54 left. The Cavs never scored again, as our friend Pargo, in particular, put on a clinic of "ugh" down the stretch. In the span of two minutes, the former Gonzaga man racked up two offensive fouls, a missed layup, a blocked layup, and a pair of missed free throws. Ballgame.

Next up: The MASH unit welcomes the Rose-less Bulls for a game that might otherwise have been TiVo worthy.