On March 7 last season, the Cavs went into Denver and won on a Kyrie Irving layup with time expiring. Irving went coast-to-coast and willed his team to a win. Things did not work out so well for the Cavs on their lone trip to Denver of the season. The table was set for Irving to work some magic and help help his team secure the win, but it was not meant to be. For starters, Irving was a game time decision because he was feeling ill. Irving had some fanstastic baskets and moves in the game, but it was fairly evident that he wasn't playing to the best of his abilities due to his illness.

Irving finished the game with 28 points, 3 rebounds, 7 assists and 5 steals. Irving needed 26 shots to get his point total. Either Irving was affected by being sick and altitude or he was paying homage to Dion Waiters' shooting abilities. Regardless, this was not the strongest performance that we've seen out of Irving. Irving played hard, but it was not enough. Kyrie Irving had all 7 of his assists in the first half.

The Cavs started the game off on a good note. They led by a score of 30-23 by the time the first quarter was over. In fact, there were multiple times in the second quarter where the Cavs were up by 11 points. Once again, the big early lead did not matter. The Cavs often times find themselves outclassed and facing teams with more talent. It Is possible for them to sneak a win

or two against elite temas throughout the season, but they do not stand much of a chance in winning if they do not play a near perfect game.

For example, Kosta Koufos scored his career high against Cleeland. This is a guy who has been in the league for 5 years and who has played 219 games. In nont of those games did he ever score 21 points.

The most interesting matchup with Tristan Thompson and Kenneth Faried. They are both similar players. Thompson's defense is superior to Faried's, but the latter is better on the offensive end of the court. Faried plays with a lot of energy, is constantly boxing guys out and going after every single rebound. It is not outlandish to say that he may eventually lead the league in rebounding. Faried had 17 points on only 7 shots. The Nuggets average 1.20 points per shot and Faried had 2.42 points per shot against the Cavs. Thompson played reasonably well himself, but his 16 points and 7 rebounds are overshadowed by Kenneth Faried.

Going into the game, the Nuggets were shooting 3.23% better than their opposition. The opponents of the Cavs shot 5.38% better from the field. This was not an issue on Friday night. In fact, the Nuggets only shot .004% better from the field. Other than Kyrie Irving feeling under the weather, the major reason the Nuggets won the game were rebounding and assists. The Nuggets pounded the Cavs on the boards. They had 56 rebounds compared to 35 for Cleveland. On the season, the Nuggets average 3.6 more rebounds per game than their opponent. Against Cleveland, they had 21 more. In addition, the Nuggets moved the ball very well. They had 24 assists compared to 12 for the Cavs. The one thing that Cleveland did better than Denver was forcing turnovers. The Nuggets had 22 turnovers, which was significantly more than the 15 that the Cavs had.

A key moment in the game happened with time winding down in the 4th quarter. The Nuggets were inbounding the ball from the sideline. Danilo Gallinari found himself wide open at the top of the three point arc and he made a huge three-point shot. from that moment on, the game was completely out of reach for Cleveland.

The good news is that the Cavs travel to Los Angeles to take on the Lakers on Sunday night.

Cleveland could really use the break from playing playoff teams and I am sure they are relieved to have a lottery team like the Lakers coming up on the schedule. There are not a lot of teams that the Cavs are playing better than currently, but a potential win is a win.