If there was a statistic called the “media coverage vs. actual relevance ratio,” the L.A. Lakers would rank second only to Tim Tebow over the last few months. Never has a lifeless, 16-21 basketball team garnered so much analysis, nor supposedly “turned a corner” on more occasions. Chalk up last night as L.A.’s latest awakening, as they finally ended a brutal six-game losing streak by brutalizing our poor, defenseless (literally) Cavaliers, 113-93.

It was just a month ago that Cleveland (9-30) got perhaps its signature win of the 2012-13 campaign, surviving a 42-point onslaught from Kobe Bryant to beat the Lakers at the Q, 100-94. Kyrie Irving was the star that night for the Cavs, but he also had considerable help from Anderson Varejao (20 pts) and a hot-shooting C.J. Miles (28 pts). Flash forward to last evening at Staples Center, and the change in scenery proved more than just geographical. With Varejao out for the next two months and Miles tossing bricks like a disgruntled construction worker (1-of-9 from the field), the needed ingredients for an upset were no longer in stock.

To add to the Cavalier obstacles, Dwight Howard—who wasn’t expected to suit up after missing the three previous games with a shoulder problem and just general non-committal sissiness—wound up putting his shorts on and dominating Cleveland’s makeshift frontcourt of Tristan Thompson (10 pts, 8 rbs) and Tyler Zeller (6 pts, 5 rbs). In 30 minutes on the court, Howard point-blanked 9-of-11 shots, scoring 22 for the night with 14 rebounds. This took some pressure off NBA scoring leader Kobe Bryant, who tallied 23 points in just 28 minutes.

Why did Kobe play just 28 minutes? Well because this game was never really competitive,

that's why! After a Tyler Zeller jumper cut the Laker lead to 17-14 midway through the first quarter, Los Angeles swiftly ended the evening's drama by closing the period on a 20-6 run, making it a 37-20 ballgame. From there, the Cavs would never get any closer than 10, as L.A. stomped down any comeback hopes in the third quarter, when a three-pointer from our old chum Antawn Jamison (16 pts) extended the lead back to 17 at 80-63.

Kyrie Irving had a solid if not spectacular game for Cleveland, posting 15 points and 7 assists. Alonzo Gee added 14 points (including one replay-worthy put-back dunk) and Dion Waiters managed 15 points off the bench (though it came on another lackluster 7-of-18 shooting effort with 4 turnovers to boot). Thanks to the blowout, Byron Scott went an unusual 13-players deep, dusting off the likes of Jon Leuer (2 pts, 1 rb) and Omri Casspi (0-4, 0 pts) for some junk-time exercise. Shaun Livingston also played 25 minutes in this game, which is always the sign of a team that's going places.

As for the Lakers, their coach Mike D'Antoni had talked about how Sunday night marked the "new start of the season" for his beleaguered crew of overpaid soap opera thespians. And as far as ESPN is concerned, beating the Cavs really is headline news, even if Luke Walton was guarding Kobe Bryant for chunks of the evening.

The Cavaliers exciting west coast swing continues tonight in what should be a thrilling lottery ball battle with the Sacramento/Seattle Kings.