The Cavaliers seem to be in a little bit of a pattern. In games where they fall behind by quite a bit in the opening minutes, they either tend to win or have their rally come up short. In games where they lead by a significant amount early, they have the wheels fall off and lose. The latter happened against the Dallas Mavericks on Friday night. The Cavs began the game on a 21-12 run, but it was not enough to secure a win. The Mavericks eventually won by a final score of 96-86.

It was going to be tough to beat the Mavericks on the road with Kyrie Irving and Anderson Varejao already out with injuries. When news broke that Wayne Ellington would miss the game due to an injury, it made things even more difficult. Daniel Gibson took the bulk of his minutes and was essentially a non-factor. Gibson played 21 minutes and literally did nothing but record 4 assists and miss a three point attempt. Gibson had the worst +/- in the game with a -17. Gibson has been the odd man out in the rotation for the Cavaliers, so rust should be expected. Having said that, it is concerning that he looks to be afraid to shoot. It doesn't matter in the grand scheme of things because these are likely his last games as a member of the Cavaliers. However, the Cavs only lost by ten points and that may not have happened if one more bench player could have stepped up.

The Mavericks were shooting a disappointing 38.6% from the field in the first half. The Cavaliers were shooting 46.3%, yet they only had a 46-38 lead. the insignificant lead was probably the first sign that the Cavs were not going to win the game despite it looking like everything was going Cleveland's way. The Cavaliers and Mavericks played nearly identical games in the first half with the exception of three point shooting. Dallas only made 1/9 of their attempts from beyond the three point line. Once they progressed towards the mean in the second half, the

game completely changed. In addition, Dirk Nowtizki was struggling to start the game. He missed his first five shots. Like the Mavericks did with their three point shooting, Nowitzki progressed to the mean and made 6 out of his next 12 shots. None was more crucial than the 25" three pointer he made with 2:05 remaining to put his team up by 12.

There was a stretch in the fourth quarter where it seemed like the Cavs were virtually unable to score. They let the Mavericks go on a 13-2 run, which was essentially the turning point in the game. The Cavaliers got lazy with their shots and relied on jump shots that were not converting. In addition, they were turning the ball over at an alarming rate during that period of the game. It felt like the Cavs would let the Mavericks run the table until Tristan Thompson ended the drought on an offensive putback with 4:58 remaining in the game. It was too little and it came too late for it to matter.

This was a late season game between two lottery teams. Even though it had its moments, it was not the most exciting game. Darren Collison threw up a prayer of a one-handed and off-balanced contested hook shot that banked in. There was a stretch in the second half where the Cavs and Mavericks traded three pointers. There was some entertaining dunks and some fun moments where every player was diving for a loose ball. Nothing was more entertaining than something that happened in garbage time. The Mavericks put in rookie Chris Wright for the first time this season. He only played 41 seconds and scored on his only shot. Why it was so great was because Chris Wright's entrance into the game marks the first time that a player with Multiple Sclerosis played in an NBA game. On a night that had little importance besides lottery standings, it was great to see this.

The Cavs have a very tough schedule in the next week. They take on the Spurs in San Antonio on Saturday night. Things do not get easier for the Cavaliers after the Spurs game. After that, they play the Indiana Pacers, Miami Heat and Houston Rockets.