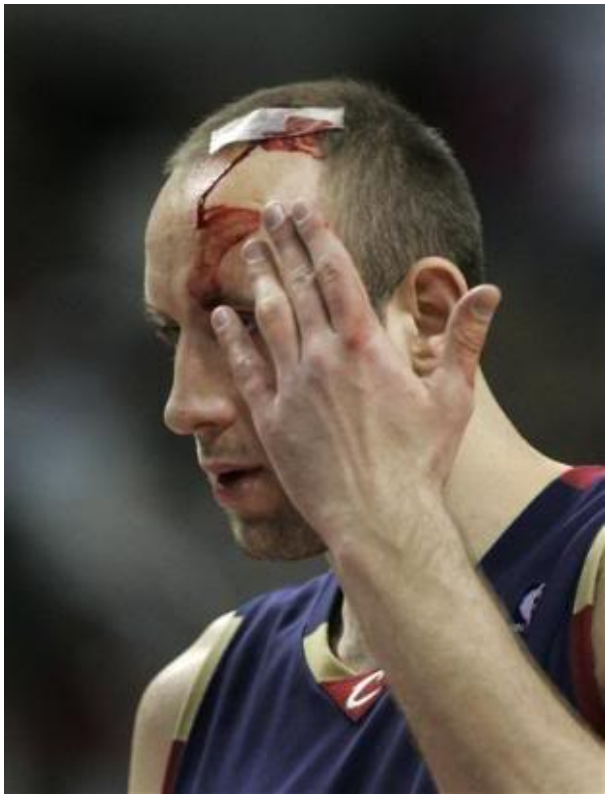

As a diehard Cavaliers fan, I was incensed watching yesterday's game.

Let's be honest. The Cavs aren't winning a title this season. And Detroit has beaten every quality team that has walked into that building within an inch of their lives this season. Their only two home losses this year are to Atlanta and Utah on the second of back to backs. They've won twelve straight at home, eight of those games by double digits.

What bothered me wasn't the fact they lost. It was the way they lost. And it wasn't even the Rasheed elbow as much as it was the Cavaliers reaction (or lack thereof) to said elbow.

I'm sure many other Cavs fans had the same thoughts I did as blood gushed from the wound in Z's melon. The same two teams. Sixteen years ago. Substitute in Rick Mahorn's elbow and Mark Price's head.

Has anything changed? The Cavs weren't tough enough then to get over the top, and they aren't now. I was sick to my stomach watching Rasheed's thuggery go down without even the thought of retaliation. I'm not expecting fisticuffs, but how about a hard foul of our own, or someone kindly letting Rasheed know they've got Z's back? Instead, the Cavaliers continued to let Detroit push them around and impose their will.

If I'm Mike Brown in that instance, I would have lost my god damn mind. Instead we get the following quote from Nice Guy Mike today. "Rasheed got a little upset and hit him on purpose." The statement was almost apologetic towards that piece of shit Wallace. Making Brown look like an even bigger ass, Rasheed came out and admitted the blow was intentional, saying "I'm not going to start cracking a guy in the skull if I didn't get elbowed first." If there was ever a time for a coach to take a statement making technical foul, or incur a fine for inflammatory comments, that was it.

As mentioned earlier, forget this year. Will this team be any tougher in 2007 or 2008 when we expect them to compete for a title? Or will Dwayne Wade and a tough as nails Pistons team constantly slam the doors on Cavalier seasons the same way Michael Jordan and a tough as nails Pistons team did in the late eighties?

The Cavs spending splurge this off-season established the core of this team for the next three seasons. The only players the Cavs will add will have to come via trade or salary cap exemptions. Drew Gooden will be one of the players dealt, and it will come this off-season. Yesterday's game was a perfect example why he and Z in the same starting front court would be a death sentence come playoff time. Z and Gooden are too soft to co-exist, especially with the Pistons as the team we'll have to beat to go anywhere these next three seasons.

Who's going to become this team's Charles Oakley? Where's he going to come from? Will someone be willing to deal us a player like this in exchange for the soft and air headed Gooden? If so, why? I know I wouldn't. Will the mid-level

exception yield us that player? The draft?

It's tough to put that mantle on LeBron James, especially at age 21. I do sometimes worry that LeBron is more worried about everyone in the league being his friend, than he is about establishing an identity for this team. And how soon is too soon to expect … no to DEMAND … that to change?

The Cavs stand little to no chance of beating Detroit in a seven game series should they make it to them. But with the recent Milicic trade opening the door for the team to resign Chauncey Billups, this will be the team to beat for the next three seasons. Their entire starting five are all at or entering their prime, and inked for the foreseeable future.

And yesterday's game just showed us how far we still have to go.

The Cavs have a chance to make it all right tonight. The two teams go right back at it, this time in C-Town. This is a statement game for this team for this season. The Cavs are 1-3 since the break, and coming off two consecutive second half swoons to start the LeBron James era. A group of three or four teams are closing in on their tenuous hold on first round home court advantage in the East.

Go prove me wrong tonight fellas. And give me a reason to believe for these next three months.