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THE SUMMARY:

The Cavs trounced the Toronto Raptors, 120-97, last night at Quicken Loans Arena. That's right – they scored 120 points, second best on the season (topped only by the 124 points they scored against Golden State on January 30th).

For the first half, the game was actually quite close. The Cavs took the lead for good (11-10) on a LeBron James jumper with five minutes remaining in the first quarter. They maintained the lead through the second quarter, and pushed it to 10 points at the half courtesy of a Shannon Brown half-court buzzer-beater.

Toronto started the second half as though they were going to storm into the lead. Chris Bosh scored seven quick points at the outset of the third quarter, and a three-point play by T.J. Ford cut the Cavs' lead to 66-62. But Larry Hughes responded with a couple of jumpers, and after a barrage of three-pointers near the end of the quarter (with Sasha Pavlovic, Donyell Marshall, and LeBron James all joining in the fun), the Cavs held a 94-73 lead by quarter's end.

The fourth quarter was essentially Human Victory Cigar time. The Cavs did have a three-minute drought early in the fourth, allowing Toronto to get to within 16 points at 99-83. But LeBron responded with a couple of drives that lead to four free throws, and after Hughes

buried a three ball to give the Cavs their largest lead of the game at 110-85, it was time for Damon Jones, Ira Newble, and David Wesley (who in Toronto go by the names of Uros Slokar and Darrick Martin) to pull off the warm-ups.

LeBron led all scorers (no, I don't use cut-and-paste; I actually type those words every time) with 36 points, and Hughes backed him up with 27. Anderson Varejao added 14 points and 11 rebounds. Bosh scored 25 points to lead the Raptors, with Juan Dixon right behind him with 24.

WHAT I LIKED ABOUT THE GAME:

Memo To Coach Brown: *This* is how you want to move the ball on offense. Putting Larry at PG and Sasha at SG turned out to be a great move. Please make a tape of last night's game and review it often.

I Guess His Toe Must Be OK Now: LeBron had his sixth consecutive strong game since his slump (you know, when he scored *only* 20 points a game instead of his usual 27-28) last month. He tallied 36 points in 37 minutes of playing time, shooting 10-of-20 from the field and 15-of-17 from the line. (Not coincidentally, Mark Price was in the building last night, as the Cavs celebrated their 1986-87 team.) He added six assists and five rebounds. He even blocked three shots, including two in a row by Toronto's Bosh and Joey Graham.

The 15-of-17 figure from above was not a misprint; he really did go to the line that many times, and missed only twice. And I'm telling you, the reason he did so well is because *he bent his knees, allowing him to get his lower body into the shot*
. This statement must come as a revelation to Fox Sports Ohio announcer Fred McLeod (who swore that he did not see any difference in LeBron's form as compared to other games in which LeBron has struggled shooting free throws). McLeod is correct in that most of LeBron's form was the same: grabbing the ball, taking three deep breaths, then dribbling the ball three

times, then looking up and shooting. The difference was the knee bend. When LBJ bends his knees, he's a great free throw shooter. When he doesn't … then the ball could go anywhere.

I Guess His Flu-Like Symptoms Must Have Disappeared: Hughes, a frequent resident of the other side of this column, played a terrific game last night as well. 27 points, a sparkling 11-of-17 from the field, five rebounds, five assists, and he ran like a demon on fast breaks. With Daniel Gibson out with a toe injury (which will apparently sideline him for two weeks), Hughes played point guard. While he doesn't have the ball-handling skills to be a classic point, he did the job well enough (as 120 total points suggests).

Speaking of flu-like symptoms: my questioning the use of that term in a column earlier this week (wondering why they couldn't just have said "Sasha Pavlovic will miss tonight's game with the flu" generated more mail than any other statement I've ever written. (In other words, I received *two* replies about that comment, as opposed to the *one* comment I may receive about other items I write.) Alert reader Nishant de Quadros (a recent graduate of CWRU Medical School, which means that he will be paying the equivalent of Hughes' salary to the Sallie Mae folks over the next ten years) can set all of us straight:

The term "the flu" should technically only be used to refer to the influenza virus. Therefore while it is unlikely that Pavs had influenza, his secreting mucus from every orifice was described as "flu like symptoms" to give people an understanding of the type of illness he had.

And I must admit, it does sound better than "Sasha will miss tonight's game because he's running to the shitter every two minutes."

"Sure, I'll Have Another Bag Of Peanuts": Here is a brief overview of the 48 hours in Shannon Brown's life starting on Thursday night:

- Played for the Cavs in Dallas on Thursday evening, scoring five points in seven minutes of action;
- After the game, was told that he would be sent to the Albuquerque Thunderbirds of the NBA's Developmental League;
- Flew to Albuquerque to join his new teammates;
- Scored 14 points in 28 minutes of action on Friday night against the Arkansas RimRockers, which sounds less like a professional sports team and more like an act that a hooker would charge at least five hundred bucks to perform (which in turn reminds me that McLeod hasn't used the term "rim job" in a while);

- After that game, was recalled by the Cavs to the main roster (because Gibson's toe injury apparently resurfaced some time after Shannon was already in New Mexico);
- Flew from Albuquerque to Cleveland in time to rejoin the Cavs for the contest against the Raptors.

Based on how Shannon played last night, the Cavs should have him fly all over the country between games. Let him moonlight as a pilot, if necessary. He scored 14 points in only 13 minutes of playing time. He was effective from both outside (he hit all three three-pointers that he attempted, although one of those was the beat-the-clock half-court bomb to close out the second quarter) and inside (he had a nice alley-oop dunk late in the game).

Possibly his most impressive play came in the final minute of the first quarter (yes, he was in the game in the first quarter!). Varejao blocked a shot by Bosh, starting a Cleveland fast break. Brown was flying down the right side of the court. He got the ball, then took off for a thunderous dunk, in split-leg Air Jordan style. He was fouled by Toronto's Kris Humphries and could not complete the dunk, but the athleticism he showed was terrific. (In true Cavs style, he then split the pair of resulting free throws.)

Speaking of jumping, this gives us the opportunity to revisit the David Wesley layup debacle from the other night (which also gives us the opportunity to point out that YouTube rocks). Frequent e-mailer Tom Oktavec (who has requested use of another name in this space, lest his boss find out how he really spends his work day; accordingly, his *nom de column* going forward will be "Thomas Oktavec") suggests that the Cavs should place a sticker of Wesley on the bottom of the backboard, in the spirit of Dwight Howard's "sticker dunk"(yep, YouTube really rocks) on All-Star weekend. Thomas, that's a brilliant idea, except for one technicality. Wesley did not even make it to the backboard, so the Cavs would have to place the sticker in the air,

which is physically impossible. Perhaps they could dangle it on a string from the bottom of the backboard?

BETTING TIP: You could probably call Las Vegas right now and place a bet on where the airlines sent Brown's luggage. The early favorite is Seattle.

Hitting The Glass: After being out-rebounded in several recent games, the Cavs hit the glass with a vengeance last night, collaring 54 rebounds in all (nine more than Toronto managed). I don't have any pithy commentary to add; just wanted to mention that it was good to see lots of orange jerseys rebounding the ball.

Sign Of The Apocalypse: Or to Toronto, a sign that last night was Not Your Night: With 27 seconds remaining, Ira Newble stepped behind the arc and launched a three-pointer. *Swish*
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Newble's three points gave him five for the season, and pushed him ahead of Dwayne Jones (three points on the year). Scot Pollard (who has posted a robust 12 points this season) is within reach…

WHAT I DIDN'T LIKE ABOUT THE GAME:

Who Are We?: That's right: a special double edition of "Who Am I?", the game that nobody has noticed has taken this column by storm!

Combined, we are over fourteen feet tall. Despite that, we collected only 13 rebounds between us, and several of those were off our own missed shots (we shot 3-of-12 from the field, so there were plenty of opportunities!). Even though we allegedly play close to the basket, we went to the free throw line only two times the entire game. Fortunately, Toronto's "center" is a skinny 6-foot-10 guy, so our team wasn't hurt that much; but if we keep playing like this, then the guy with the crazy hair is going to replace one of us (perhaps both!) in the starting lineup. Who are we?

My only additional comment, and a repeat of what I said the other day: Z, if your head is not in the right place (and it probably is not, with good reason), then take the time you need.

WHAT LIES AHEAD:

Cleveland gets another test this Monday evening when the 36-23 Houston Rockets come to The Q. They'll follow that one by traveling to Detroit to face the Central Division-leading Pistons on Wednesday. After that game, the schedule will get somewhat friendlier, with games against Milwaukee, Indiana, Sacramento, and Memphis.