One offensive rebound away from a win in six versus the Pistons last year and a berth in the Eastern Conference Finals, the Cavs will go back at it this year when the NBA Playoffs start on April 21st. Can the Cavs win the East and advance to the Finals this year? This is the question we asked our Roundtable as the team gets set to embark upon their final twelve games of the regular season. Per usual, we got some varying opinions from the group.

"The Roundtable" is a regular weekly Sunday feature that will continue throughout the year covering hot topics surrounding the Browns, Buckeyes, Cavaliers, and Indians. One question. Several different answers from TheClevelandFan.com panel.

The playoffs kick off in about four weeks, and the Cavaliers recent good play may have many people wondering if they can not only go further in the playoffs this year than last year, but if they can win the East and reach the NBA Finals.

Since the Cavaliers were pounded on Super Bowl Sunday on February 4th by the Pistons at The Q 90-78, the Cavaliers have turned it up a notch the last seven weeks. Since that beat down by the Pistons, the Cavaliers are 15-6 and have improved their overall record from 27-21 and barely hanging onto a playoff spot to 42-27 and in full control of the #2 seed in the East with a slim-to-decent shot at trumping the Pistons for the #1 seed. Included in that stretch is an eight game winning streak, with the Cavaliers taking out the Pistons in Detroit.

The Cavaliers appear to be getting tuned up for the stretch run and the 2007 NBA Playoffs. With their recent inspired play, we polled some of TheClevelandFan.com writers on their thoughts regarding how realistic a chance the Cavaliers have at winning the East, and being the East representative in the NBA Finals to get smoked by Dallas, Phoenix, or San Antonio:

John Hnat: CAN the Cavs win the East this year? You better believe that they can, for two reasons:

1. They have the best player in the conference (unless D-Wade comes back with no ill effects from missing two months);

2. The East is wider open than Paris Hilton's ... you get the idea. There is no dominant team in the conference. Any of the top teams have as good a chance as any of emerging.

Probably the two biggest competitors to the Cavs are Detroit and Miami. (What about Chicago, you ask? Their complete lack of interior scoring punch will hurt them in the playoffs.) If Detroit keeps the top spot in the conference, and if Miami ends up at 4 or 5, then they would be poised for a second-round playoff showdown. Much as the Pistons had little left last season after the Cavs pushed them to their limit, the winner of this hypothetical Detroit/Miami matchup could really be limping into this year's conference finals. And that could be very good news for the Cavs.

Winning the East is sort of a hollow victory: whoever escapes will be likely cannon fodder for Dallas or Phoenix in the Finals. But Cleveland has as good a chance as any of being that fodder.

Erik Cassano: The Cavs "can" win the East, as in "They are capable of winning the East." That's not a question in my mind.

The real burning question is, "Will the Cavs live up to their potential come playoff time?"

Cleveland might be the most fickle team in the NBA. Some nights, they are locked in, play hard and execute well. Those games they almost always win. Some nights, they just don't look that interested in even being on the court. Those games they lose, virtually without fail.

For some reason, they can't seem to take what they do on the good nights and make it a game-in, game-out priority like established contenders such as Detroit and Dallas do.

This is a team that could get to the NBA Finals if the playoffs find them properly motivated. Or they could get bounced in the first round if they lapse into one of their inexplicable phases where they don't give a crap.

LeBron might be the heart and soul of this team. But Drew Gooden is the poster boy: Really talented and really inconsistent.

Mansfield Lucas: Can the Cavs win the East?

Sure they can. Why the hell not? They have the second best record in the East and besides their recent skid, they seem to be playing their best ball at the right time. More importantly, the east is the least.

The Cavs have a nice post season team because they rebound so well. They are a big team and can legitimately go 3 deep at the 4 and 5. That is a huge luxury when you go to the walk it up, grind it out playoff style ball. They also have the superstar, although someone needs to send the NBA refs the memo. I can see there being a defining moment this season when someone goes off on Bron like Charles did to Ehlo. What will we do?

The Hughes to point default move that injuries forced the unimaginative Roker to try has done nothing short of turn the season around. The Sasha, Hughes and Bron trio is a winning combination, and hopefully in the playoffs Roker doesn't fall back in love with his vets exclusively and Brown and Gibson won't be banished for the severely overdone Snow and Wes.

The Cavs should float through round one, and then round two will be very interesting, especially as the Heat may loom in the path. Other than Detroit, you can throw the records out the window. They pose more of a challenge to the Cavs than anyone but Detroit.

Look, the Cavs have enough talent to not only win the east, but to win a title. All that is stopping them is having a great coach. Roker is competent. He's not a buffoon. But he's not very good either. I've seen no evidence at all he can get the team to a championship level by either getting them to play together, fully installing his O and D so they play either flawlessly together like a champion, or inspiring them to be better than the sum of their parts. They will need to do all those things to win a title, but they can be- so-so and beat Detroit.

The Pistons just aren't that good anymore.

If the Cavs don't underachieve, and Bron plays at the same level as last post-season, they have a real good shot at winning the east. □□

Jarad Regano: I think the Cavaliers are poised for another exciting playoff run this spring. The recent hot streak has all but assured the Cavs of a first round home court advantage. While the last month of the season has been refreshing, though, I still definitely see a ceiling with the current roster as it is compiled.

The current condition of the East, though, should allow the Cavs to be competitive in a seven game series with any conference opponent. I still do not think they will have the ability to outlast Detroit, but as their current position stands, that would be one round further than last year.

The good news is that I think Danny Ferry is dead set on doing whatever it takes to add a top notch second option for LeBron. If he can pull that off, the Cavs should be the team to beat in the East for the final three years of James' contract.

Hiko: Can they? Certainly. Will they? I have my doubts.

As well as they've been playing recently, they're still prone to intense offensive letdowns, especially against the better teams. They're still somewhat inconsistent. Right now, I would say they are playing just as good as Detroit. But not significantly better, which will probably result in them keeping pace with, but not quite catching, the Pistons.

Now if Larry Hughes would kindly refrain from randomly sticking his head up his arse and

become a consistent second scoring threat, then I would give them a better than average chance. But, for the time being, I'm going with the theory that the Cavs will end up the #2 seed in the East.

Tony Lastoria: You bet the Cavaliers can win the East, although, so can just about anybody else. With no truly dominant team in the East, it all boils down to who is playing well four weeks from now, who gets hot, and how teams execute. Whoever finishes with the top four seeds in the East, home court advantage may be the only thing that separates their counterparts seeded #5-#8 in the first round. As a result, we could be in store for a lot of crazy games and outcomes to series' in the East this year. I mean, the Cavaliers have just as much a chance of being a first round knockout as they do of winning the East. That's how up in the air and uncertain the East playoffs will be this year.

Still, with the East is so wide open, it is there for the taking. The opportunity is NOW. The Cavaliers have the superstar to ride in the playoffs, and they have enough decent players around him to make a run and come out as Eastern Conference champs and take their best shot at the West champion. The question is, will Mike Brown's lack of offensive brainpower, the absence of a quality point guard, or the Cavaliers inconsistent play be exposed in the playoffs? Or, can the Cavaliers overcome those issues enough to at least get out of the East before they are stampeded by the West representative? Stay tuned.