At 36-26, the Cavaliers find themselves 8 1/2 games up on the Chicago Bulls with 20 games remaining. The Bulls are currently on the outside looking in as the 9th seed in the East.

The way I see it, the Cavaliers have to win just six of their final twenty games to assure a spot, and could concievably still get in, even if they were to stumble to a 5-15 or 4-16 finish. And of those final twenty games, six come against Charlotte, Boston, and the Knicks. And Orlando, Portland, and Atlanta are also still on the schedule. In total, 11 of the final 20 games come against teams with losing records.

I think it's safe to say it. The Cavs are going to the playoffs. For the first time since 1998. When we lost in four games to the Pacers despite a spirited effort from Shawn Kemp. The fact that Shawn Kemp was our centerpiece the last time we made the playoffs just tells you how long it's been.

Kemp would go on to become the first person maybe ever to develop simultaneous addicitions to cocaine and overeating. Those two don't exactly go

together like chocolate and peanut butter. In addition, Kemp fathered eight children with seven different women.

Back to this years Cavs, they also find themselves up four games on Indiana for the fourth seed in the East. The fourth seed is great from the respect that it would give us home court advantage in that first round. It's bad from the respect that the Detroit Pistons, the #1 seed, would loom in the second round. The argument could easily be made that the Cavs would be better off with the #6 seed, and matchups in the first two rounds with the winner of the Atlantic Division (likely New Jersey), and then the #2 seeded Miami Heat in the second round.

However, seeing as how the Cavs are not serious title contenders this season, simply getting out of the first round should be the only thing any sane Cavs fan is thinking about. Playoff experience in the NBA is so vital, and the Cavs are so sorely lacking that. Winning a playoff series, and then getting a chance to play a team like Detroit in the Eastern Conference semifinals would be invaluable experience to this team, who will expect to be title contenders for the next three seasons.

Regardless of how heavily the odds are ultimately stacked against a playoff run of any significance, I'm excited to once again get the chance to watch my team in the playoffs. Despite the same sad ending each season, some of my fondest memories as a youth are of some of the big playoff wins this franchised registered from the mid-eighties to mid-nineties.

We're back baybee.