Cavs Blow 15 Point Second Half Lead at Miami

The Cavaliers national television struggles continued yesterday afternoon, as they were dominated over the final 15 minutes, blowing a large second half lead at Miami against the Eastern Conference rival Heat.

The Cavs led 69-54 with three minutes left in the third quarter, then proceeded to get outscored 44-23 down the stretch, falling 98-92 to Miami. The Heat were allowed to shoot 63% in the fourth quarter, and won the final stanza by a count of 33-20.

The loss overshadowed a 47 point effort from LeBron James. LeBron hit 24-28 free throws, and no one on Miami could do anything to stop him. Strangely, Miami only played defensive stalwart James Posey 19 minutes. Posey has had some success defending James in the past. Zydrunas Ilgauskas also added 21points for the Cavaliers.

Unfortunately, the Cavs got next to no production from anyone not named James or Ilgauskas. The rest of the team combined for just 24 points on 10-33 shooting. The Cavalier bench was outscored 38-5 by the Heat reserves. The Cavs bench was outscored 67-12 in their embarrassing loss to the Magic on Friday night.

The Heat was led by an inspired Alonzo Mourning, who finished with 16 points and 8 rebounds, and was a defensive force all afternoon. Mourning was playing so well, Heat coach Pat Riley kept Shaquille O'Neal on the bench for all but two minutes of the final quarter. Mourning made four straight shots in the final quarter, and also affected countless Cavalier attempts as the Heat completed their comeback. Dwayne Wade also had a superb game for Miami. Wade scored 35 points, and also added 9 rebounds and 7 assists. The win was the 11th in 12 games for the red hot Heat, who are now 41-21, and have a stranglehold on the #2 seed in the Eastern Conference.