It's Cavs-Pistons, tonight, 8 PM from the Palace at Auburn Hills. Do the Cavs have a realistic chance to advance to the NBA Finals? In Erik Cassano's latest, he gives five reasons why Cavs fans should be optimistic. And five reasons why they should be wary. And he makes his predictions on how this series will shake down. Let's get it done tonight! GO CAVS!!!!!

So you chugged an entire bottle of Mylanta when the Cavaliers lost Game 5 against the Nets. You were about to kick the dog when the Cavs let a 22-point lead dwindle to one in Game 6, but thought better of it when the Cavs pushed the lead back out to seven.

All in all, the final four games of that Nets series were just about more than your digestive tract and nervous system could handle.

Guess what? Pistons fans will soon tell you to drop the delicate diva act and get ready for the real playoffs. Now, a berth in the NBA Finals is on the line as the Cavs head to Detroit to begin the Eastern Conference finals on Monday.

Pistons fans will tell you that you’re in a different league now. They should know. Their team is making its fifth consecutive appearance in the East finals. The Cavs, on the other hand, are making their first appearance in the conference finals since 1992, when the Mark Price-Brad Daugherty era reached its high water mark in a six-game loss to the Bulls.

You think you know everything there is to know about the Pistons because the Cavs took them to the brink of elimination last year? Wrong. That was a round earlier. A conference title wasn’t on the line. The stakes are raised now, and these Cavs are headed into uncharted waters.

The prep rounds are over. The Cavs are where we expected them to be when the playoffs started, and they are about to get a crash course in what it means to be an elite team in the NBA. Over the next week, we'll see if the shoe fits.

Five reasons to be confident:

1. They lace up their $200 custom-designed basketball shoes just like everybody else.

The Pistons had trouble closing out the Bulls just like the Cavs had trouble closing out the Nets. Just like the Cavs, they lost a miserable Game 5 at home and needed to go back on the road to win the series. The Pistons are a tremendous team, but they aren't invincible.

2. The Cavs know the Pistons aren't invincible.

Even if the stakes are raised, even if this might actually be a better Pistons team than a year ago, the Cavs aren't going to head into this series with sweaty palms because mighty Detroit is on the other bench. The Cavs know they can play with this team. Now let's see if they can turn that belief into action.

3. Athleticism, meet athleticism.

The Bulls are a very good defensive team. But the Cavs should pose matchup problems for Detroit that Chicago simply couldn't. Cleveland's starting lineup might lose the skill battle as a unit, but they'll be able to hang with Detroit size-wise and athletically. That could come into play in a big way at the defensive end.

4. An opening for a glass cleaner.

What does no Ben Wallace mean to this series? The Pistons have no singular, dominant rebounder to keep possessions alive. That's not to say owning the boards is going to be a simple matter of effort as it was against New Jersey. But if Zydrunas Ilgauskas, Drew Gooden and Anderson Varejao are swiping some of the boards that Wallace would have gotten last year, the Cavs will be able to level the offensive playing field a bit.

5. "You think MJ beat Detroit training in a pool?"

If LeBron James wants to become the heir to Michael Jordan's throne in any way, shape or form, he's going to need to beat the Pistons in the playoffs. In order to beat the Pistons, he's going to have to develop a hearty dislike of losing to them. We saw the beginnings of it in last year's playoffs, and it continued in a small way when he strapped his team to his back and carried them to an overtime win in Detroit this season, the only time in four meetings the Cavs beat their lofty neighbors to the north.

LeBron's Detroit education continues Monday. Sooner or later, he's going to want to do everything in his power to beat this team.

Five reasons to be wary

1. That starting five is just ridiculous.

The Pistons have not-so-arguably the best starting lineup in the NBA. You can have Phoenix, you can have San Antonio. I'll cast my vote for the starting lineup with five guys who can all step back and shoot threes. Every member of Detroit's starting five can penetrate, rebound, defend, and burn you with jumpers when you close off lanes to the hoop. It's virtually impossible to stop all five at one time.

2. It's like fighting your shadow.

The Pistons play like the Cavs, only better. Unlike Washington and New Jersey, up-tempo teams the Cavs could frustrate by slowing the game down, the Pistons are at their best playing the same slow-down ball Cleveland tries to play. The Cavs might actually be better-served by trying to speed up the games in this series.

3. This isn't Mikki Moore you're facing.

So far, Moore is what has counted for an inside banger among Cavs playoff opponents. He got under the Cavs' skin more than just a little bit, so I can only imagine what Rasheed Wallace has in store. It's imperative that the Cavs steel themselves against Wallace's beatdown shenanigans, or while the Pistons are raining threes, the Cavs will be raining T's, as in technical fouls.

The quickest way to short-circuit this Cavs playoff run would be to have key players start missing time with ejections and suspensions because they couldn't

control their tempers. That's exactly the type of game Wallace wants to play.

4. The Pistons shooting-guard-turned-point-guard actually plays like a point guard.

At some point during this series, Larry Hughes, the Cavs' pseudo-point guard, will forego setting up the offense and distributing the ball to his teammates in order to get some for himself. When he does that, he'll go 3-for-whatever from the floor, finish with eight points and the Cavs will lose.

While he is doing that, Chauncey Billups, once a selfish combo guard himself, will be making the extra pass to a wide-open Chris Webber, who will convert the shot. That, ladies and gents, is the essential difference between Cleveland's offense and Detroit's offense.

5. Foul trouble looms

Am I the only one who is concerned that Sasha Pavlovic and Anderson Varejao are going to spend huge chunks of this series on the bench in foul trouble? Varejao seems like a probable culprit, but after watching Pavs play against the Nets, I'm convinced the Pistons are going to lure him into committing a lot of dumb fouls early in games.

Eric Snow had better keep his old muscles limber. If Pavlovic has a lousy series, Snow is going to get a lot of playing time.

The X-factor: Intangibles

Focus. Desire. Intestinal fortitude. All the things that are hard to quantify, but all good teams have. The Cavs are about to get a really big test to determine where they stand among the best of the best.

Postseason Fear Factor: 8

Prediction: Pistons in six

The Cavs are growing as a team, but chances are there are going to be a number of mental execution blunders the Cavs will make that the Pistons won't, points that will swing the series in Detroit's favor.