The Cavs lost to the San Antonio Spurs 83-32 in Game Four last night, and the Spurs' victory gave them a 4-0 sweep of the Cavs and their fourth NBA title in the past decade. John Hnat chimes in one last time with another game recap, and goes out strong with another outstanding effort today making comparisons of Lebron and this Cavs team to a young Indy Jones where they will have many more good days ahead of them. Props to the Cavs on a great run, and Hnat for an outstanding first season of The Good, Bad, & the Summary.

THE SUMMARY:

You lost today, kid. But that doesn't mean you have to like it.

This quote comes from what should have been the last installment of the Indiana Jones series . (It apparently will not be , as Spielberg, Lucas, and Ford all came to realize that they have mortgages to pay and trophy wives to keep.)

It is the quote that keeps running through my mind this morning.

In case you never saw the movie (or, like me, saw it so long ago that most of the film has faded into the rarely used parts of the cerebellum), the opening scene has a chase scene featuring the young Indiana Jones. Young Indy, played by River Phoenix, has reclaimed some artifact/prize from a group of Bad Guys.

The chase scene takes place on a train, and we watch as young Indy snorts lines of coke at the
Viper Room
eludes said Bad Guys time and again.

As the chase continues, the faces of young Indy's opponents turn from disgust and irritation to admiration.

Young Indy eventually jumps off the train and runs home with his prize, which he shows to his father ... who promptly turns it over to the sheriff, who in turn hands it to the Bad Guys who are the rightful owners. One of the adversaries places his hat on Indy's head (it's the floppy hat that would become Indy's trademark throughout the movies), and says:

> *You lost today, kid. But that doesn't mean you have to like it.*

Implicit in the statement is that the "kid" will have many more days ahead of him, and that he will win on more than a few of those days.

That's where the Cavs find themselves this morning. They ran, and ran, and went much farther than anybody believed they could.

In the end, they just could not get the job done.

But they have showed a lot of talent and character to get this far; and while we can spend the day mourning what could have been, we should also celebrate what it has been.

Now for the facts: the Cavs lost to the San Antonio Spurs 83-32; the Spurs' victory gave them a 4-0 sweep of the Cavs and their fourth NBA title in the past decade. LeBron James, looking rather tired (which is understandable, as he became a father for the second time in the early hours of Thursday morning), led the Cavs with 24 points (on 10-of-30 shooting from the field, alas). Drew Gooden (11 points) and Daniel Gibson (10) were the only other Cavaliers in double digits.

San Antonio was once again led by Eric Clapton, Ginger Baker, and ... whoops, wrong power trio.

Their usual trilogy of Tony Parker (24 points), Tim Duncan (12), and Manu Ginobili (a game-high 27) accounted for 63 of the Spurs' 83 points.

You lost today, kid. But that doesn't mean you have to like it.

Much like Game Three, Game Four was close throughout the first quarter (neither team led by more than five points at any time in the quarter, and the period ended with Cleveland holding a slim 20-19 lead), and then the second quarter ended with San Antonio taking the lead (the score was 39-34 at the half). In the first half, the Cavs had no answer for Tony Parker.

The fast Frenchman alternated between blurry-fast drives to the hoop and a surprisingly accurate three-point shot to amass 15 points by the intermission.

As we have seen all too often this season, Cleveland fell behind further in the third quarter. Parker continued to be the main nemesis, scoring nine of the Spurs' 21 points in the frame. The Spurs led by as many as 11 points (60-49) with less than a minute remaining in the third, although a Gibson three-ball cut the lead to eight going into the final quarter.

In the fourth, the Cavs made what would prove to be their last run of the season.

Donyell Marshall, who had previously missed a couple of shots from beyond the arc, moved into the paint (
hallelujah!)
and scored on a couple of layups early in the fourth (the second one coming on a rebound of a missed James layup).

Moments later, Marshall split a pair of free throws to cut the San Antonio lead to 60-57.

The Quicken Loans Arena crowd was electric, just waiting for the Cavs to take the lead.

They got their wish moments later, as two LeBron baskets on consecutive possessions (the first on a 20-foot jumper, the second on a bulldozing drive down the left side of the lane for a layup) gave the Cavs their first lead since the opening quarter.

(Indeed, it was their first second-half lead of
the entire series
.)

Gibson extended the lead to three points with a layup on Cleveland's next possession. The crowd at The Q was ecstatic. San Antonio appeared to be falling into a deeper and deeper hole...

...and that is exactly when they are most dangerous. Duncan hit a hook shot to trim the lead to one ... then after a couple of missed three pointers (one by Marshall and one by Damon Jones), Ginobili scored on a powerful drive to the basket. He was fouled on the play; although he missed the free throw, Duncan tipped in the miss.

Suddenly, Cleveland's three-point lead was a three-point deficit, and the Cavs would never recover.

A pair of Fabricio Oberto baskets (one of them a three-point play) gave the Spurs an eight point lead (74-66) with two minutes remaining. It was time for Cleveland's last stand of the season.

The Cavs did their best - LeBron drained a three-pointer; then after the teams traded some baskets, Jones was fouled while attempting a three-pointer and made all three freebies to make it a 79-76 game with seven seconds to go.

They then fouled Ginobili, who hit both free throws, but (after a time out) James buried another three-pointer to cut the lead to two (81-79) with four seconds to go.

The last flicker of hope died when Ginobili made tow more free throws with two seconds left. That gave San Antonio an 83-79 lead, and with little enough time on the clock for the Cavs to do anything about it. Damon Jones hit the Brook Jacoby Memorial Three-Pointer to cut the final margin to one.

But that one is all the Spurs needed.

Game over.

Series over.

Season over.

You lost today, kid. But that doesn't mean you have to like it.

WHAT I LIKED ABOUT THE GAME:

Quite a bit, actually. The team played with more energy than in any other game of the series. Gooden and Ilgauskas in particular crashed the boards. LeBron handed out 10 assists, in addition to his 25 points. The

defense was generally smothering.

Hell, even Eric Snow hit a pair of jumpers.

But with the season having just ended, it is difficult to think about the last game. I would rather think about the season as a whole...

WHAT I DIDN'T LIKE ABOUT THE GAME:

It is not proper to speak ill of the dead, especially when the death occurred so recently, so I will not. There will certainly be enough other post-mortems available that will criticize LeBron's spotty performance, the Cavs' general lack of outside shooting, their inability to close the deal after taking a fourth quarter lead, and so on.

Instead, what I really did not like about the game is that it was the end of a magical season. Think back to October. Certainly Cavs' fans were feeling plenty of optimism as the season was about to begin.

Almost all of the fan predictions I recall from the time had the Wine and Gold winning anywhere from 50-60 games and going well into the playoffs.

The season was a little more troublesome than most of the fans seemed to believe it would be, but the Cavs still emerged with 50 victories (for the second straight season) and the second seed in the Eastern Conference playoffs. They swept a depleted Wizards team in the first round, then outlasted the Nets, setting up a rematch of last year's series against the Pistons.

Not many people gave the Cavs much chance to win that series, even though they had come within one offensive rebound of the upset.

After dropping the first two games of the series in heartbreaking fashion, the Cavs regrouped to win the next four games, including LeBron James' 48 point explosion in Game Five and Boobie Gibson's 31 point outburst in the finale.

No, the series against the Spurs did not go the way that Cavs fans would have hoped. Cleveland did not win even one game. We will now have to endure another season of the world's Skip Baylesses (there's more than one?

s
hudder
) and Charley Rosens (
ditto
) clucking their keyboards and saying how the Cavs
just aren't ready
and how they
aren't among the league's elite
and how LeBron is
a good player but not a true superstar
.

But the point is that the Cavs took all of us fans on a terrific ride, especially the past two months. Cleveland saw its first Conference Finals games in a decade and a half, and its first NBA Finals games ever. Who would have foreseen all of that fun last fall?

I certainly did not.

Few would have.

This season was the last one that had the magic of a team on the rise. Next season, the minimum expectation will be a return to the NBA Finals.

Anything less than that and the team will have regressed by definition.

Even a repeat of this year's performance will leave a bitter aftertaste.
Next year, the expectation will be nothing less than an NBA title.

In that way, 2006-07 had a magic and a fun that will not be present in the same way when the 2007-08 season tips off.

The Cavs played 102 games this season. That is more than they have played in a season ever, and it is far more than the 82-games-and-off-to-the-golf-course seasons that were the norm until LeBron ping-ponged his way to The Q.

In the end, though, 102 games was not enough.

I wanted more.

Not just the three additional games that could have given the Cavs their first title ever (and the city of Cleveland its first title in which the highlights could be shown in color).

I simply did not want this season to end, ever.

I want an endless summer of Boobie knocking down three pointers, Z spotting up for that 18 footer, Larry driving and hitting his mid-range jumper, Andy harassing opponents into terrible shots, and LeBron soaring high above the masses for yet another thunderous dunk.

That is what I really did not like about this game - that it represents The End. It's an ending that we knew was coming, but that knowledge does not make the loss any easier to take.

So thank you to LeBron, Larry, Z, Boobie, Sasha, Drew, Anderson, Donyell, Eric, Damon, Shannon, Scot, Ira, David, and Dwayne. Thank you to Coaches Mike, Hank, Melvin, Michael, Kenny, and Chris.

Thank you to Danny for putting this team together.

Thank you to Dan for writing the checks and for providing great entertainment value.

Thank you to the entire Cavaliers organization for giving all of Cleveland a team worth their cheers.

And thank you for giving us a team that has a bright future, and that can keep that candle of championship hopes burning.

WHAT LIES AHEAD:

For the Cavs' players: some R&R, followed by a summer of working on those jump shots. *(No, Donyell, that does not mean you can treat yourself to a doughnut for every shot you make.)*

For the Cavs' front office: if you can imagine, the NBA Draft is less than two weeks away (it will be held on June 28). The Cavs do not presently have any picks in the draft, thanks to the last vestiges of the Jim Paxson Legacy.

(Jiri Welsch sure helped the team this year, didn't he?)

But the rumors are a-flyin' that they will trade or buy their way into the draft, so stay tuned.

Soon after the Draft is over, the free agent season starts. The Cavs basically do not have the cap room to make any major impact signings, but they do have the

annual veteran exemption, and the possibilities for a sign-and-trade are always there.

For this column: look for "Cavs 2006-07: The Good, The Bad, And The Summary" in the next few days.

And then I'll be on the teacher plan (read:

extended vacation) till next season.

Thanks to each and every one of you for reading these columns throughout this incredible, wild ride of a season.