Hughes Returns, Z Twists Ankle In Blowout

The Cavaliers welcomed back shooting guard Larry Hughes last night with a 124-91 whitewashing of the Philadelphia 76ers, setting season highs for points scored and margin of victory in the process. The Cavs have now won nine straight games, are at 45-29 on the season, and are on the cusp of wrapping up home court in the first round of the playoffs.

The news was not all rosy for the Cavaliers. Center Zydrunas Ilgauskas twisted his ankle two minutes into the game, and would not return. X-Rays were negative, as was an MRI, and Ilgauskas was able to walk himself off the floor. The team said he is doubtful for tonight's game and that they are anxious to see how Z is feeling in the morning, when many of these ankle injuries begin to hurt worse.

Hughes took to the hardwood for the first time since New Years Eve 2005, and played 19 minutes. He scored 10 points on 3-8 shooting, grabbing one rebound, dishing out three assists, and also registered two steals. He also committed four fouls and had four turnovers, and was clearly and understandably a little rusty. The Cavs have eight games remaining before the playoffs start on April 22nd. Hughes left to a standing ovation with two minutes left in the game.

This one was a rout from the outset. The Cavs shot 57% on the night, and held the Sixers to 37% shooting. They outrebounded Philly 50-27, and had 30 assists. And they hit 11-22 from three point land.

The Cavs once again received a super-human performance from LeBron James, who may very well be closing in on the NBA MVP award at the ripe young age of 21. LeBron had 37 points, 4 rebounds, 7 assists, and 4 steals.

LeBron once again had plenty of help on this night. Drew Gooden scored 23 points on 11-16 shooting. Anderson Varejao filled in admirably for the hobbled Z, scoring 11 points and grabbing 14 boards. Flip Murray scored 16 points, and was 3-3 from long range. And Damon Jones stayed hot, hitting 4-7 from three for 12 points on the night.

The Cavs play against the Knicks in the Garden tonight, and then have two days off. Their magic number to clinch the #4 seed is down to three.