You hate to call any win this early into a 82-game regular season "big", but the Cavs 110-106 victory over the Knicks last night really was. The team was coming off a disasterous opener, and departs this morning for a brutal six games in nine nights west coast road trip. It was the LeBron and Boobie show last night, as LBJ dropped 45, 7, and 7 on NY .... and Boobie scored 24 on 6-9 from three point land. Sam Amico recaps the win for us.

Observations from the Cavaliers' 110-106 victory over New York Friday at Quicken Loans Arena:

* The Cavs needed this win for more than the fact they're departing for the West Coast on Saturday. They also proved they can score more than 100 points -- something that may have been in doubt after their 74-point clunker against Dallas on opening night. For the Cavs, it had to be a real boost of confidence.

* LeBron James and his 45 points will get most of the credit for this win, and deservedly so. But let's not forget about Cavs guard Daniel Gibson. He opened the game with a four-point play, then buried gutsy 3-pointer after 3-pointer in the fourth quarter, the main reason the Cavs pulled away.

* This was also a game in which James saw all of his off-season dedication come to life. It's fun to focus on his appearances on the ESPYs and Saturday Night Live, but James is a celebrity because of his basketball work in the summer. A lot of that could be seen in his shooting, as he went 16-of-22 from the line and 13-of-28 from the field.

* Mostly, James was as aggressive as he's ever been when it comes to going to the basket and looking for the ball in the low post. The Knicks banged and bullied him, and LeBron made them pay by knocking 'em down at the line. On nights like this, it's easy to understand why the league's general managers voted him preseason MVP.

* Or how about this from Knicks coach Isiah Thomas: "(James was) as good as that other No. 23 that I played against." Thomas was referring to Michael Jordan -- and remember, this is Thomas doing the talking. He's not usually one for hyperbole.

* OK, back to Gibson. It's not clear yet whether he is the starting point guard the team needs. But if he keeps shooting like he did Friday, it will be impossible for coach Mike Brown to keep him off the court. Gibson was a sizzling 8-of-12 from the field, including 6-of-9 on 3-pointers. Afterward, he just smiled and said, "I'm just trying to provide a spark. That's all."

* James on Gibson: "It's not like we haven't seen that before. We are always in the gym together ... getting up shots everyday. It pays off in the game."

* Forward Drew Gooden (14 points) may have been the only other Cav to reach double figures in scoring, but this truly was a team victory. Damon Jones came off the bench to score eight underrated points, hitting both of his 3-pointers. Also, young center Dwayne Jones offered plenty of hustle off the bench. Good things may be in store for this athletic kid with the positive attitude. He has the potential to be a regular contributor.

* The Cavs also were the "opportunistic, up-tempo team" Brown said he hoped they would become at the end of last season. "We got points in transition," said guard Larry Hughes (9 points, 5 assists). "That's how we need to play." Amen to that.

* This was an impressive win for another reason -- namely, the Knicks are considerably better than the team that missed the playoffs last season. A big part of that has to do with newcomer Zach Randolph (21 points, 14 rebounds), acquired from Portland in the off-season. Also, former Cavs draft pick Jamal Crawford (25 points, 6 assists) appears to finally be healthy and as quick as ever.

* The Cavs weren't spectacular from the line (22-of-31, 71 percent), but the Knicks were worse (14-of-23, 61 percent). As Thomas will tell you, it's often the little things that make all the difference in a game like this. "If we do a better job at the foul line, it's a different ball game," he said.

* Finally, about that West Coast trip. It begins Sunday in Phoenix, a team that loves to run and gun and have lots of fun on its way to nearly reaching the Finals

every year. Last season, the Suns raced past the Cavs both times, after the Cavs got caught up in their breakneck pace. "It's going to be a great test to see how our transition defense is," James said. "If not, the score will probably look like it did (in the loss to Dallas)."

* Not to be lost in the first two games is the job Cavs center Zydrunas Ilgauskas has done on the boards. He had 17 rebounds in the season-opener, then a team-high 12 on Friday.