Game Winning Jumper With 0.5 Seconds Left Boosts MVP Resume

It may be time for Charles Barkley to reevaluate his thoughts on LeBron James not being able to close out games.

LeBron did it again last night, draining a 22-foot jumper with under a second left to knock off the New Orleans-Oklahoma City Hornets by a 103-101 count. The Cavs have now won eleven of twelve, and are steamrolling towards a likely first round matchup against the Washington Wizards.

The game had a playoff-like atmosphere, with a sell out crowd in Oklahoma City voraciously rooting on their Hornets, who badly needed this win to boost their hopes of securing the final playoff spot in the west. Mike Brown, who is on record as wanting to get James more rest down the stretch, sat James down with about ten minuets remaining. But with the game tight, and crowd loud, Brown reinserted James, and it resulted in a Cavalier win in a hostile environment, which will only help them come playoff time.

LeBron scored 9 of his 32 points down the stretch, making the Hornets pay for their lack of an interior presence, getting to the basket at will. And he got all kinds of help from the emerging Flip Murray, who scored 25 points, 17 of them coming in the second half. Flip was 3-6 from three, and the Cavaliers as a whole were 11-18 from long range.

Some may simply hear “Hornets” and not think too much of this win. This is a different Hornets team than the one the Cavaliers opened the season with, and they have one of the top home court advantages in the league when they play in Oklahoma. The game was well-played, as the two teams combined for just 15 turnovers. Without Zydrunas Ilgauskas, the Cavaliers were killed on the boards all night.

Donyell Marshall was clutch off the bench, draining 4-5 from three and 6-7 overall from the field. Larry Hughes continued to struggle to get his mojo back, scoring just 6 points in 26 minutes.

The Cavs have tonight off, and travel to Detroit tomorrow for a game versus the vaunted Pistons Wednesday evening.