No Andy. No Sasha. No Drew. No Boobie. No problem! In one of the guttiest wins of the Mike Brown era, the Cavs went down to Atlanta last night and beat the Hawks (winners of three straight) by a 100-95 count with a cast of reserves and role players. Ira Newble had a big game for the Cavs, and Eric Snow shook off the rust to run the offense and play lock down D on Joe Johnson. Brian McPeek recaps the unlikely win.

Some things are hard to explain. Take the success and career arc of Ryan Seacrest as one example.

Another example would be the healthy Atlanta Hawks, winners of three straight heading into Friday's game with the Cavaliers, including a 98-95 victory over the Los Angeles Lakers on Wednesday, getting outworked and outplayed by an injury-depleted Cavs squad in a 100-95 Cavaliers victory Friday night in Philips Arena.

The Cavs went into the game without the services of not only Anderson Varejao, Sasha Pavlovic and Drew Gooden, who have all recently missed multiple games, but also without Daniel Gibson who sat out the Hawks game with a strained hamstring suffered Thursday night in Houston.

When Eric Snow and Ira Newble took the floor to start the game, it looked like Cavalier points would be at a premium. But the Cavs hung around early, took a

big lead in the 3rd quarter, and then hung on again to hold off a late Hawks rally and split their brief two game road trip.

Newble again came up huge. In 38 minutes the veteran from Miami, OH scored 18 points on 8-12 from the floor (2-3 from 3-pt range) and also added 8 rebounds. LeBron James led the Cavs with 26 points, 11 rebounds and 7 assists.

It wasn't all wine and gold-colored roses however. Larry Hughes left the ballgame late in the 4th quarter with what was initially being called a sprained toe.

Despite the injury situation there were plenty of positives out of Atlanta. Let's go to the tape and talk about....

What We Liked

- No Excuses- That's been a motto for this club for over a year now and it was in display on Friday night in Atlanta. The short-handed Cavs played hard-nosed, lunch pail basketball against the Hawks. The Cavs controlled the tempo well enough early to stay close and allow

James to find his stroke. Once LBJ knocked down a couple of shots the floor opened up and that allowed James to find Newble and Damon Jones for multiple open looks. Jones and Newble hit those shots Friday and provided LeBron with a great deal of offensive help.

- No Whining- Apparently the officiating crew of Bennett Salvatore, Leon Wood and Gary Zielinski left their whistles at the hotel because this game looked more like a team-UFC match-up or a rugby scrum for much of the ballgame. The officials were content to let guys play, bang and hack away at each other and not disrupt the game with such trivial things as foul calls or free throws. To the crew's credit, they didn't alter that approach down the stretch to any great extent and the players followed suit. The Cavs adjusted to the officials and took advantage of the no-holds-barred style of play to block 7 Atlanta shots and to aggressively defend all night long.

- Snow Time- Eric Snow shook off some rust and ran the offense for 27 minutes Friday night. The Canton McKinley star scored just two points but his contribution on the defensive end of the court proved invaluable. Snow harassed Joe Johnson and Tyronn Lue for all 27 minutes he was on the court. Those two were a combined 11-27 from the field and Snow's defense down the stretch forced Lue and Johnson to take some difficult shots against Snow and straight into some help from the Cavs big men. Snow finished the night with five steals as well as five assists on a night when the Cavs had to get something of a contribution from him.

- Help Has Arrived- The Cavs not only got the 18 points from Newble and the 26 from James, but Zydrunas Ilgauskas chipped in 17 points and 11 rebounds, Hughes scored 15 to go with 7 boards and Damon Jones picked up the Boobie slack by hitting three of his five

3-point shots and scoring 13 points on the night.

Still, even on a night where the Cavs played with a lot of heart and determination, there's always time to talk about ... **What We Hated**

- God Bless Eric Snow- And anyone unfortunate enough to have seats on the floor beneath the basket at which he's shooting. Snow was 0-4 from the field and he missed all four of those shots in a variety of ways. He had a lay-up blocked, he flat out missed another lay-up and he tossed a couple of rim-bending jumpers toward the goal. You would truly have

to go back a long way to find a worse shooter from the floor than Snow. He might be 50-50 to just hit the floor if he drops a ball. Snow plays hard for every second he's on the floor, he brings valuable intangibles to the court and the locker room and he's never backed down from a tough defensive assignment in his life. But you are undoubtedly playing four on five basketball on the offensive side of the court when Snow is in the lineup.

- The Paper Pony Maybe? When slasher extraordinaire Larry Hughes one day goes into the Basketball Hall of Fame, his plaque is not likely to

include the nickname of "The Iron Horse". Hughes left another game Friday night when his team needed him most. From this corner's vantage point, about 760 miles away from the action, it appeared Hughes sprained his toe by stepping awkwardly on the ... well... court. Maybe it was the sideline that jumped up and took him out, but whatever it was, there has got to be a time when Hughes grimaces, shakes his leg and jogs back down to the other end of the court and takes his place with the other four Cavs.

Honestly, Hughes can hurt himself on

a bowl of jello. No one is playing doctor and no one knows his own body better than Hughes, but at some point this guy is going to have to sack up and play with a little pain. The 7 healthy Cavs need him out there and, if the time hasn't already come, he's going to lose credibility in the locker room every time he limps off the floor.

Finally

The Cavs play their next three games at the ‘Q' starting with Sunday's 7pm clash with the Denver Nuggets. The Magic

are in town the next night followed by a Wednesday visit from the world champion San Antonio Spurs. All three of those squads are certain playoff teams and all have better records than the Cavs (28-21). The whirlpools and training staff will be busy on Saturday.