One can't be sure how long a New Orleans hangover will last, but it's safe to say it affected the Cavaliers and Rockets All-Stars for at least 48 minutes of play on Tuesday. Yao Ming, Tracy McGrady, LeBron James and Daniel Gibson all participated in this past weekend's All-Star activities. Between them they were 17-61 from the field. And if you can't beat the Rockets on a night when McGrady and Ming were 9-38 from the floor, well, things probably didn't go too well.

At least this wasn't a west coast start time.

If fans would have had to stay up late to watch what transpired at the ‘Q' Tuesday night between the Cavs and the Rockets they would have likely taken up torches and marched toward Gateway Plaza with murder on their minds.

In the end, the Rockets beat the Cavs 93-85 in as sloppy a game as you're ever likely to see.

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activities. Between them they were 17-61 from the field. And if you can't beat the Rockets on a night when McGrady and Ming were 9-38 from the floor, well, things probably didn't go too well.

James did overcome a terrible shooting night to lead the Cavs with 26 points. He also gathered 13 rebounds and passed out 11 assists in collecting his 5th triple-double of the season. Zydrunas Ilgauskas and Larry Hughes each added 16 points for the Cavs.

Unfortunately for the wine and gold, no one on the bench reached double figures in any category. In fact, the bench as a whole didn't reach double figures in either points or assists. It's that type of ‘production' that will limit a club to 36 first half points, which is what the Cavaliers scored to trail at halftime 42-36.

James got going in the second half to keep it close, but it was far too little, far too late.

Rafer Alston led the Rockets with 22 points, including 6-10 from long range. McGrady added 17, Ming 16 and some guy named Luis Scola chipped in 15 points and 8 boards.

Even on an ugly night like this there were:

Things We Loved (This will be extremely short)

- James missed his first seven shots from the field but still found a way to collect another triple-double. And on a night when the team as a whole shot 35% (that's like having five Larry Hughes's on the court at all times!), those 11 assists are nothing short of miraculous.

- The above hereby ends the things we loved.

Things We Hated

- You can understand the hangover effect if you're talking about guys who actually went down to New Orleans and participated in the weekend's events. But how can guys like Donyell Marshall, Devan Brown, Damon Jones and the rest of the gang that can't shoot straight come out looking that lethargic and disinterested in resuming basketball operations?

- Seems like months ago already that Hughes scored 40 points and 26 points in

consecutive games. Tuesday night he again looked tentative and devoid of confidence. Numerous times he seemed caught in between taking the ball to the basket, shooting the mid-range jumper or kicking the ball out to a shooter on the perimeter. He was effective at pretty much none of the three. Your starting point guard dished out all of two assists and was 5-15 from the field for 33%. That's not going to get it done. Making it more worrisome is that the 33% shooting on the night is just two percentage points lower than his season field goal percentage.

- This game, and admittedly it was just one game, was a microcosm of all that is wrong with this Cavaliers team. It is a team that is completely and solely reliant on one great player. On most nights that will give you a chance to get a win. But there are occasional games, rare as they may be, where James struggles to find his stroke and/or his floor

game early on and you need someone else to step up and keep you in the ballgame until James does find it. The problem is that guy is not currently on this roster and there's little that can be done right now to get him here.

Scarier still is that there are a couple teams out there who can neutralize James as much as he can be neutralized by way of their defense or via match-ups. San Antonio is one team that can force the Cavs to look for someone other than James to beat them. Houston is another. The Rockets play very good defense and they typically limit an offense to one shot at the basket.

- Tuesday night was a night where the presence of Anderson Varejao was sorely missed. AV's hustle and energy would have been welcomed on the floor, on the bench and in the arena. The Cavs needed a spark and a

big body. Not having AV hurt.

Finally

There's no rest for the weary. The Cavs left for Indiana immediately following Tuesday night's game in order to make the short trip to Indianapolis to face the Pacers on Wednesday night. Sitting at 29-24 after Tuesday's loss, Wednesday's tilt against the 21-32 Pacers becomes a big game. The Pacers haven't played since last Wednesday and will be well rested. Sure, they're a bad basketball team, but a refreshed bad basketball team can still jump up and bit this Cavalier club. Especially if the good guys walk through another one.