Cleveland was 5-8 against New York since LeBron's second season going into Wednesday night's game at Madison Square Garden. As usual, the Cavaliers were shorthanded, but LeBron James made sure it didn't matter. The King wowed the fans in Manhattan and answered Kobe Bryant's 52-point salvo with 50 of his own, the second time in the season he has gone for half a hundred, and the Cavaliers took down their third consecutive win, 119-105.

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Game Recap by Quarter

First Quarter

The crowd at MSG came expecting a show, but the wunderkind was

content to allow the situation to develop; he didn't take his first shot until the 8:21 mark, when he set the tone for the night by canning a long jumper to give his team the lead, 8-7. In fact, the King was a benevolent monarch for most of the first quarter, taking just three shots while handing out six assists in a three-minute flurry that took the Cavaliers from a tie to six up with under two minutes remaining. Nate Robinson wasn't so bashful; he brought the score back to a 27-27 tie at the break with two quick buckets and penetration-and-dish to David Lee, who would be a really valuable guy if he played for someone other than New York.

Second Quarter

Nate Robinson's bantam-sized assault on Cleveland's defense continued as quarter number two opened. Four more points from the diminutive Washingtonian completed the 10-2 run and gave New York a 31-29 lead. By then, the King had decided to make a policy change in regards to shooting the basketball. LBJ fired up his team's first six shots of the quarter, making two of them, and converted a pair of free throws at the expense of New York's hack-tastic defense to pull the Cavaliers into a four-point lead.

It was tied when LeBron went to the bench for his first- and as it turned out, last- ‘blow' of the night. His replacement, Devin Brown, had been aggressive at the outset, scoring Cleveland's first four points of the night, and he stayed that way, scoring five more in a 7-0 run. The Cavaliers ended up with a pleasing +4 in the nearly four minutes of the second quarter that the King sat on the bench.

Not surprisingly, the Knicks weren't willing to roll over. Cleveland-killer Jamal Crawford, relatively quiet thus far, now stepped into his familiar role of tormentor. The ex-Wolverine and Cavalier draft pick bombed away for eight points in the last 4:22 of the half, tying it at 44-44 on a shot clock-beating prayer from downtown.

The final two minutes belonged to the King. With the game tied at 48, he scored the Cavaliers' last ten points in a run that gave Cleveland a 58-54 halftime lead. Multi-tasking with aplomb, the King was able to personally outscore the Knicks and carry on a running dialogue with Jay Z at the same time. Every move LeBron made drew audible gasps from the appreciative New York crowd, and always the entertainer, #23 saved his best for last; with time running out in the half, his 35-foot runner hit nothing but bottom, Reggie Miller-style

Halftime presented the usual Cavaliers-Knicks scenario. LeBron had 20 points and seven assists, and had found help in the form of Joe Smith- a monster on the offensive glass- and the backcourt combo of Devin and Delonte, which combined for 22 on 8-of-11 from the field. New York's own guards were proving a problem, with Crawford and Robinson- ex-high school teammates according to the ever-helpful Fred McLeod- combining for twenty and each providing fuel for separate bursts that kept their team in the game.

Third Quarter

Cleveland started the third quarter as if it actually might make things comfortable for themselves at MSG, methodically building a 64-56 lead

three minutes into the period. Here the Knicks, who had been firing away from outside like the Hickory Huskers with George substitute-coaching, found their inevitable hot streak. Shockingly, Jamal Crawford and Nate Robinson were the ringleaders. The pair accounted for four of six consecutive made shots by the New Yorkers, including back-to-back threes that finished off a 17-2 run and gave the Knicks a 74-66 lead with five minutes remaining in the quarter. The gasps for LeBron had now turned into lusty cheers for the home team.

The Cavaliers, who had gotten New York into early foul trouble but obligingly settled for outside jumpers, finally started making them. Three-balls by Wally Szczerbiak- who struggled from outside and was hammered all night by Wilson "Two-Last Name" Chandler- and Damon Jones brought Cleveland within three points at 78-75. Then LeBron, repeating his second-quarter heroics, scored the last ten points of the third, capping off an 18-7 run with back-to-back bombs from downtown. It was 84-82 Cavaliers at the end of three.

Fourth Quarter

Playing at a fast pace, as they had all night, the teams fired away to start the fourth, with little Nate Robinson canning another three to put the Knicks in front 90-88 lead at the ten-minute mark. Damon Jones bottomed out a three of his own to flip-flop the Cavaliers into the lead, and LeBron made a runner, split a pair of free throws, then found DJ for another three that made it 97-91 Cleveland. New York stayed stubborn; when Crawford tossed in a floater, it was down to 99-98 with 4:28 left. LeBron then provided the *coup de grace*; he dropped consecutive threes to make it 105-98, made another three following a pair of Ben Wallace free-throw makes (that's right), and, with Cleveland leading by

eight with just over a minute remaining, canned his fourth in a little over three minutes to make it 113-102 and draw the curtain on the night. New York fans gave LBJ a standing-O as he left the court for the last time. One even invaded the playing area to express his appreciation for the performance; the King put his fist to his heart in thanks as security led the fan away. The Garden denizens left deeply impressed with the prodigy they wish was theirs. One fan

They also left losers.

Odds and Ends

How the game was won: The Cavaliers were efficient offensively. They committed only ten turnovers, passed out 23 assists, shot 48 percent as a team, and with the exception of the third-quarter drought, never really broke down for an extended period of time. The biggest key was a hot night shooting from downtown, as the Cavaliers chucked up an unconscionable 32 threes, but made 17 of them. The Knicks shot 51 percent and did pretty much whatever they wanted offensively- especially Crawford and Robinson, who combined for 49- but on this night, they were beaten at their own free-firing game.

LeBron's line: 50 points, 16-of-30 from the field, 7-of-13 from three-point range, 10 assists, eight rebounds, and four steals.

48 of those points came in the last three quarters, and 32 of those 48 came in the last four minutes of the period. The King closed rather exceptionally.

Other heroes: The guard tandem of Damon Jones, Devin Brown, and Delonte West played precious little of the first letter of their first names, but they picked up slack offensively, combining for 39 points and going 9-of-15 from beyond the arc to help the King pile up the dimes. Joe Smith was splendidly workmanlike, pulling down 11 rebounds in 22 foul-plagued minutes, including seven on the offensive end. Wally World's road woes continue; he went 1-for-7, making it 9-for-38 from the floor in three games away from home since joining the team. To be fair, he was getting mugged with enthusiasm all night, and he did hit the money three that started Cleveland's third-quarter comeback.

Next: Thursday night at 8:00, when the Cavaliers make their first trip of the season to the city of Chicago.