When Dwayne Jones enters the game with seven minutes left, you know all hell has broken loose. And that's exactly what happened last night at the MCI Center in the nation's capital. At home, on three days of rest, with their season on the line ... the Washington Wizards absolutely destroyed the Cavaliers, from start to finish. The Anti-Branson, John Hnat checks in this morning with a harrowing but hysterical account of last nights rout.

THE SUMMARY:

Have fun recapping this one. Hope your parents enjoy reading it.

That was the e-mail I received from GBS Hall of Fame reader Tom Oktavec during the third quarter of last night's debacle at the Verizon Center in Washington.

Let me sum up last night's game with one sentence: *Dwayne Jones entered the game with 6:58 remaining in the fourth*

quarter.
Now, when Dwayne Jones enters the game, one of three things has happened:

1. The Cavs are winning by a huge margin (such as last Monday, which now seems like it happened about ten years ago);
2. The Cavs are losing by a huge margin;
3. All other Cavs big men have suffered "oh the humanity!" type injuries that preclude them from playing.

You're a smart reader; you've sensed the tone by now, and have realized that #2 is the right answer. And that's how Dwayne Jones came to play the last seven minutes of a (gulp) 108-72 loss to the Wizards. The loss narrowed the Cavs' lead in the series to 2-1.

The Cavs actually held a 12-10 lead midway through the first quarter. If they could have just found a 41 minute shot clock and run out the string, they would have been golden. Alas, it was not meant to be. The Wizards went on an 11-0 run to take a 21-12 lead. The Cavs did cut the margin to four, at 21-17, on a LeBron James three point play.

That's about where the Cavs highlights end. The Wizards led 49-33 at the half; pushed the advantage to 77-51 at the three-quarter mark; and led by as many as *ten zillion* during spots of the fourth quarter. (I will use the math concepts favored by my two small children throughout this column.)

James actually led all scorers with 22 points, on a respectable 10-of-19 performance from the field. The rest of the team went 19-of-54 from the field, didn't fare much better from the line (shooting just over 50% as a team). DeShawn Stevenson led the Wizards with 19 points, with absolutely none of them scored when they may have actually meant something. (And his "I'm invisible" hand wave in front of his face after making a three pointer - unfortunately, he had five opportunities to do that last night - wins the Dumbest NBA Player Gesture Award (Non-Darius Miles Division).

Oktavec was right: nobody is going to read this recap. The game was too damn depressing. In fact, you're not even reading this sentence because *nobody has made it this far into the column* . I'm sure of it. Hey, prove me wrong: click on
this link
to send me a message.
If a GBS falls in the forest, and nobody is around to hear it, does it make a sound?

WHAT I LIKED ABOUT THE GAME:

That it counts as only one loss.

Oh, and Zydrunas Ilgauskas leaking out on a fast break (believe it!) for a dunk was pretty sweet. That dunk tied the game at 6-6. That would be approximately the last time the Cavs had a chance of winning this one.

WHAT I DIDN'T LIKE ABOUT THE GAME:

Everything else. I'm serious. I'm referring to every single Cav; the coaches; the refs; and the woman located in the row, just behind Gilbert Arenas, who was showing waaay too much cellulite, waaay too high on her legs.

The part of me that believes in a second shooter on the grassy knoll and that the moon "landing" was really filmed in some Hollywood studio would like to believe that the following letter was faxed to Cavs' headquarters yesterday:

Gentlemen:

It has come to my attention that you have won the first two games of your series with the Washington Bullets ... er, Wizards, and are in a position to sweep the thing in four straight. That is unacceptable to the league, as it means up to three fewer games of ticket sales, television exposure, and ad revenue.

Accordingly, if you could look like a CYO

team tonight, the league would really appreciate it. "The NBA: Where Point Shaving Happens." Get my drift?

Sincerely,

David Stern

No, I don't really believe a word of what I just wrote. But I find it at least as believable as any other explanation for the Cavs' futility.

Okay, let's find a few specifics to pick on:

You Can Check Out Any Time You Like, But You Can't Ever Leave: Cavs guard Sasha Pavlovic has been sidelined the entire series with a chipped hangnail; yet despite not having played a minute thus far, his effect continues to be felt in this column. Unfortunately, that is not a Good Thing, as that means it is time to determine the

Sasha Pavlovic Factor (SPF)

, our barometer of boneheaded play. Even with Sasha in civvies, we can't get away from it.

It pains me to write these words, but tonight's **SPF** contestant is none other than my second favorite Cavalier, Delonte West. The normally level-headed West made a couple of (I will be nice) *questionable* decisions early in the second quarter.

First, with the Cavs trailing 26-17, West had the ball near the top of the arc. Ilgauskas was nearby, as was his defender. Delonte tried to dribble through both defenders. Wrong answer. The ball was knocked away by Washington's Brendan Haywood, leading to an easy layup by the Wizards' Roger Mason at the end.

Moments later, Delonte tried to dribble behind his back, with no

pressure on him, and lost the ball. That miscue led to a Caron Butler dunk in the other direction.

Delonte's plays were true to the Pavlovician spirit; I could have easily seen Sasha making either of those turnovers himself. But this isn't an "imitation is the sincerest form of flattery" situation; it's more like "imitation is the sincerest form of looking really GD stupid." So I am going to

bestow an **SPF** of **eleventeen** on West. (I'm not sure what that means either, but my daughter seems to think that it's a really big number; that's good enough for me.)

Alas, He Wasn't Alone: Those two turnovers by West, while egregious, really don't stand out that much. How could they, when the Cavs turned the ball over a total of 21 times on the night, including 15 in the first half

alone? We could go on for some time describing the horrors in detail - the Anderson Varejao pass to nowhere (although to be fair to Andy, it looked like he was anticipating a cut to the basket that never happened); the Boobie Gibson "here, take this ball! Really, I don't want it!" creampuff that led to yet another Washington layup ... you get the idea.

Serving The Same Purpose

As Mammary Glands On A Bull: With 11.7 seconds remaining, the Cavs' Devin Brown fouled Washington's Andray Blatche on an inbounds pass. Now, I can see Brown's thinking: *let's send him to the line, stop the clock, and then we can get that 40-point play we need!*

The slightly more accurate thinking of the other 20,000 fans in the arena, as well as countless observers in TV land, was:

why is this jackal prolonging the game with a completely meaningless foul?

In fact, we're going to re-open the **SPF** counter again, and award Brown an **SPF** of **ten zillion**, as in "you could wear this stuff while walking on the

surface of the sun and not get burned."

Now I know the question on all your minds: "John, how does Devin Brown's boneheaded play affect the outcome of this season of *Top Chef*?" The answer is that the two have no connection whatsoever, but I have some

more space to fill, and am done talking about the game. Besides, somebody has to point out the irony of this past week's episode, in which lesbian Jennifer was bounced from the show for making a dish that resembled a phallus in its presentation.

I have to say, I wasn't that sorry to see Jen go. It was only two weeks ago that her life partner Zoi was told to pack her knives and go; in that short time, Jen became insufferable with her constant dedications to her better half. "I want to keep Zoi's spirit alive in this competition." "I wanted to win this Quickfire Challenge because it was based on beer, and beer

always turns Zoi into a cheap tramp." Et cetera.

Anyway, the real contenders for the crown remain trail-Blaising Richard, who can apparently take any three ingredients and turn them into a tasty dish ("here's an appetizer made from olives, kumquats, and some wax I dug out of my ear");

previously-annoying Dale, who is now a Good Guy based on his near-hyperventilating over seeing Gale Sayers at the tailgate challenge; and Stephanie, who is still flying under the radar despite finishing at or near the top time and again. And I still believe that (a) Mark, the pride of New Zealand, is

the voice of the lizard in those Geico commercials; and (b) Andrew's head will literally explode - *literally* - at some point during the season; that dude seems very tightly wound. (Although wearing the helmet while cooking at the tailgate challenge was a nice touch.)

Those paragraphs had absolutely nothing to do with last night's game. That is not a bad thing.

WHAT LIES AHEAD:

Sometimes, you just can't win. A couple of months

ago, my now-six year old son announced that he wanted his birthday party at Pump It Up ("Now celebrating six consecutive days without a kid peeing on the big slide!"). Did they have any dates available around his birthday (which actually was three weeks ago), and which would have conflicted with (at most) a meaningless

regular season game? Of course not. So I asked him - did he really want to wait several extra weeks to have his party? Of course, he replied; no other place would do. So I reserved a slot for April 27th.

When is the next game in this playoff series? You guessed it - April 27th. This Sunday. I'd like to apologize in advance to all the parents who are going to be dragged by their kids to this shindig, while cursing under their breath at me. The NBA playoff schedule is an unpredictable crapshoot (*as opposed to those*

predictable crapshoots); you never know when your favorite team will be playing. Had I scheduled the party for Monday night, then they would have played on Monday; has I scheduled it at 2 AM, the NBA would have announced a new "Super Late Night" program aimed at insomniacs.

So you see my quandary - there was just no way I could win. I'm not like the clueless bride who schedules her wedding for a Saturday in November, then can't understand why everybody (including the minister) is sneaking updates of the OSU-Michigan game at

every opportunity ("do you take this man to have and to hold, in sickness WHAT DO YOU MEAN PASS INTERFERENCE???!? ... uh, and in health ...").

Then again, if the Cavs

pull another rock like they did last night, I may actually have parents *tha nking*
me for the excuse to pull themselves away from such a terrible game.