We came. We saw. We kicked their ass. WHAT A GAME last night in D.C.! LeBron was LeBron with a ho hum 27, 13, and 13 triple double. And Wally and Boobie ... the duo combined for 48 points, including 10 of the Cavs 11 three pointers on the night. Capping off an already great night for Cavs fans, the Hawks did the Celtics in game six, sending that one to seven games and giving the Cavs a couple extra days to rest. The Anti-Branson, John Hnat, gives us the good, the bad, and the summary on last nights win.

THE SUMMARY:

It wasn't a Game Six. It was a 48-minute bitchslap.

Riding a 21-2 run in the second quarter, the Cavs cruised to a 105-88 victory over the Washington Wizards last night at the Verizon Center. (Has anybody else noticed the connection to the Alltel commercials, such as this one , in which the guy with the Verizon shirt summons the "WIZ-ard"? That's the kind of incisive commentary that keeps you coming back to this column. Well, that, plus it usually runs before the B-List, so it gives you something to read while you're waiting.) The 105-88 score is somewhat deceptive; the Cavs were winning by as many as 25 points.

For all intents and purposes, the game was over after the previously mentioned run, even though the Cavs led by only eight points (56-48) at the half. A 12-4 run pushed the lead to 15 (79-64) at the end of three quarters, and the Wizards would not get any closer the rest of the way.

It will warm the hearts of Wizards fans everywhere to know that "crybaby" LeBron James dropped a game-high 27 points, along with 13 rebounds and 13 assists (hey, that's a triple-double!), on their team. He was closely followed by Wally Szczerbiak with 26 points and Daniel Gibson with 22. Antawn Jamison, in what may have been his last game in a Washington uniform, paced the Wizards with 23 points and 15 boards.

WHAT I LIKED ABOUT THE GAME:

The Charlotte Bobcats Called; They Want You Back As Rivals: I am like every Cavs fan reading these words right now: I am tired of the Washington Wizards. Well, I'm not THAT tired of them; they keep giving the Cavs a paved highway to the second round of the playoffs. But they (and their fans) (and their media) seem to be under the impression that there is some kind of *rivalry* between the two teams. Their fans lustily boo James every time he touches the ball (well, until their team gets behind by double-digits); they laugh with Schadenfreudian glee whenever he misses a free throw or delivers an air ball; and they positively wet themselves with joy on the rare occasions when the Wizards do pull out the W.

Guess what, Wizards Nation: there is no rivalry between your team and the Cavs. Let me repeat it, and type it very slowly this time to help with comprehension: ***there is NO rivalry between the Cleveland Cavaliers and the Washington Wizards.***
Yes, the two teams have faced each other in the playoffs in each of the past three years; and yes, there is some bad blood between the two squads. That does not equal a rivalry. How can there be, when the Cavs always (or at least as "always" as three series will tell us) win?

And A Pawn Doesn't Rival A King, Either: One of the subplots of this series was the mostly imaginary feud between James and Washington guard DeShawn Stevenson. Now it's our turn to take some joy - just a bit - in the failings of another, as we examine Stevenson's line: 2-of-9 from the field, 10 points, two rebounds, three assists, and one turnover. (And as far as I could tell, none of those waves of his hand in front of his face. Guess he breaks that one out only when his team's up by 20.)

Best of all, mentioning Stevenson allows us to poke

fun at his beard, and to compare it to that of extreme wrestler Necro Butcher. I somehow had made it through almost 39 years on this planet without hearing of Necro (or is it Mr. Butcher?), but Official Friend of GBS Gideon Oswitch recently widened my cultural horizons by introducing me to Necro's work. After an extensive study of Mr. Butcher's career, which consists of upwards of *five minutes* of watching videos of his matches on YouTube (note that most of them have the "you must be 18 years or older to view" precaution, so don't say you weren't warned), I feel like I have a handle on the major elements of the Necro *oeuvre*:

1. Smashing opponents with any number of weapons (indeed, the extreme wrestler's mantra seems to be: *when in doubt, hit somebody with a fluorescent light bulb)*;
2. Having an opponent smash him with any

number of weapons (*see* earlier comment re: fluorescent light bulbs);

3. Bleeding from the injuries sustained in #2, above.

I have to say that my days of watching professional wrestling are *looooong* behind me. But in Necro Butcher, I have the Dead Man's Curve accident scene: I cannot bear to watch, and yet I cannot make myself turn away. As much as anything, I like saying the name. *Necro Butcher. Necro Butcher. Necro Butcher.* Don't be surprised if Necro turns up again in this space.

Ten minutes ago, I had a point to make about DeShawn Stevenson. I've completely forgotten what it is. Let's move on.

Just Call Him Mr. May: Remember last season's playoffs, when Gibson emerged as one of the true keys to this team? Looks like that guy has returned to the Cavaliers, and not a moment too soon. The man they call Boobie made nine of his 14 shots en route to 22 points. Of course, several of those were from long range (four, to be exact); but Gibson also showed the ability to drive and range from inside the line. Possibly his most impressive play: in the waning moments of the first quarter, with the Cavs trailing by six, Gibson rebounded a missed shot by Washington's Roger Mason, drove the length of the court, and eased in a layup as the buzzer sounded.

NOW What Will We Complain About?: Remember Rule #1 of observing LeBron James:

Don't criticize him too loudly. He will just make you look foolish.

At this point, the major Achilles Heel in Bron's game is his free throw shooting - he made just

over 71% of his shots from the stripe this past season. That means he leaves a lot of points on the table - a point that any number of critics is only too happy to make.

I don't want to make too much out of one game, but ... LeBron attempted ten free throws last night. And he made all ten of them.

Oh yeah, he did have that triple-double too (probably most impressive was those 13 assists, as he was finding open teammates all over the court).

As Long As We're Talking About #23:

My favorite play of the game: Zydrunas Ilgauskas, playing the much-underrated point center position, tossed an alley-oop to LeBron for a resounding dunk, and giving the Cavs an 84-66 lead with a little over nine minutes remaining.

When analyzing any game, it's always fun to determine which shot was the "dagger" - the one that destroyed all hope for the opponent, and made the rest of the game nothing but a formality. This game had several candidates: Szczerbiak's three-pointer to make the score 82-64; another Szczerbiak three-ball, a few minutes later, that gave the Cavs a 91-72 lead; the there's-nobody-within-ten-feet-of-me

dunk by Joe Smith to extend the lead to 100-79. They're all great options, but I'm going with the James dunk. Not that the "O-VER-RATE-ED!" chants were that loud before the dunk, but they absolutely ended after it ... and the sound was replaced by the rustling of fans getting out of their seats and trying to get a jump on the post-game traffic.

That Guy With The Long Name Keeps Popping Up; He Must Have Done Well: When Szczerbiak came to the Cavs, he was painted as the long-range bomber who would make opposing defenses pay for double- and triple-teaming LeBron. It has not exactly worked out that way; Wally has struggled

with his outside shot ever since donning a Cavaliers uniform. Last night, we saw the guy we were hoping to see: the one who drills six shots from beyond the arc, and who ... well ... made the opposing defense pay for double- and triple-teaming LeBron. Time and again, Wally was left wide open, found himself receiving the ball, and then made the resulting shot. Granted, he and Gibson are not going to shoot this well *every* game ... but if they get even close, the Cavs become the proverbial *Team Nobody Wants To Face* TM the rest of the way.

T-E-A-M: Three more numbers from last night's game that demonstrate just how much of a team effort last night's victory was. One, the Cavs held the Wizards to less than 40% shooting from the floor. They rotated on defense (for the most part); they challenged shots; they helped out whenever possible.

Two, the Cavs had only six turnovers for the entire game. *The entire game*
. Hey, we've seen
quarters
with more turnovers from the Wine

‘n Gold.

And three, the Cavs' 40 field goals were set up by 29 assists. As mentioned, James led the way with 13 of those helpers; West also had seven, and even the big guys like Ilgauskas and Ben Wallace had a couple of dimes apiece. Are we seeing signs that the guys are getting used to playing each other?

Pass The Ketchup: Familiar things give us comfort, even if they aren't particularly good. Think of Mom's meatloaf - it was bland, and not a particularly good meal; yet you ate it every week and think of it fondly even today. It's in that spirit that we welcome back Sasha Pavlovic, who played two Human Victory Cigar minutes at the end of the game, and who had a prototypical Pavlovician moment: missed a three-pointer badly on the offensive end, leading to a fast break the other way, which ended with a Pavlovic foul. Welcome home.

WHAT I DIDN'T LIKE ABOUT THE GAME:

Cheapest. Technical. Ever.: In the first quarter, with the Wizards up by a point at 17-16, the Wizards' Antonio Daniels drove down the right side of the lane for a layup. The Cavs' Delonte West blocked his shot, but also fouled Daniels. No argument there. But West was also whistled for a technical foul

by referee Necro Butcher, for reasons that we can only guess. West did have his hand on Daniels' back as the two players landed, but didn't push him or hit him or otherwise do anything deserving of extra punishment. I appreciate how the officials wanted to keep tight control over this game (which they did); but calling technical fouls on non-plays does not help matters any.

Apparently Playing Four-On-Five Was Not An Option: With 26 seconds remaining in the first half, the Cavs holding an 11-point lead, and Washington with the ball, Coach Mike Brown put Szczerbiak into the game as a defensive replacement for West. Now, I understand that West had just committed his second foul of the game, and Coach Roker wanted to take no chances with Delonte

getting a third foul before the intermission. But Szczerbiak has never been put into a game as a defensive replacement in his entire NBA ("Where Ten Kids By Eight Baby Mommas Happens") career. He was never put into a game as a defensive replacement in his entire collegiate career. Or his high school career. Or his CYO career. Or even when he played Nerf ball in

his room with his older brothers as a four-year-old. I would have seen "putting in Wally Szczerbiak" as an absolute last option, ranking below "putting in Devin Brown", "taking my chances with Delonte", "putting in a rusty Sasha Pavlovic", and "seeing if the beer vendor in Section 135 can

man up".

Coach Brown is also en route to his third second-round playoff matchup in three years. We can cut the guy a little slack.

One More Whiny Little

Complaint: But this one was a huge issue the entire series, and will undo the Cavs if they don't address it. Time and again, when a Washington ball-handler drove into the lane, the Cavs' center left his man to challenge said ball-handler. Doing so would leave Washington center Brendan Haywood wide open under the lane for an easy pass

and dunk. This sequence happened at least three times by my count.

Even this gray cloud has a silver lining: all of those dunks happened early in the game, and the Cavs appeared to step up their interior defense to prevent any further easy baskets.

NOT THAT YOU ASKED, BUT...

Better Ingredients. Better Pizza. Not That Anyone In Northeast Ohio Will Know:

Interesting little T-shirt promotion at the game last night. Apparently a

nationwide pizza chain - one owned by a Papa named John - distributed those shirts. They had a large number 23 on the front, with the word "Crybaby" above it - clearly a disparaging reference to LeBron.

Just a guess here, but I'm thinking that Papa John's is going to see a precipitous (though likely short-lived) drop in its sales in Northeast Ohio.

Thoughts On Watching The Post-Game Interviews: Memo to

Soulja Boy: Dogging on the BFF of the most powerful man in your industry is NOT the way to get ahead in your career, young man. Maybe it gets you a few extra minutes of fame today, but it also increases your chances of being on *Celebrity Fit Club XII*

in the year 2015.

Thoughts On Watching The ESPN Wrap-Up Show While Writing This Column: If I had one of those magic lamps with a genie that grants me

three wishes, here's what I would wish for:

1. The continued health and happiness of myself, my children, my other family, and my friends;
2. A permanent case of laryngitis for

ESPN's Screamin' A. Smith;

3. A *second* permanent case of laryngitis for Mr. Smith, just in case the first one doesn't do the job.

WHAT LIES

AHEAD:

It's time for the second round! And we have no idea of who the Cavs will be playing, thanks to the Hawks beating the Celtics last night to force a Game Seven!

So it looks like the Cavs will get a few days off before facing the winner of that series sometime next week at Necro Butcher Arena.