Hear that wailing, rending of garments, and gnashing of teeth? Those are the sounds of Cavaliers fans bemoaning the (supposed) disaster that was Draft Night 2008. The selection of 19-year old power forward J.J. Hickson had fans frustrated last night, many of them wanting one of the bigger names still left on the board at #19. Jesse's guessing that most of people hadn't done their homework on Hickson, who he feels is a great fit for this Cavaliers team.

Hear that wailing, rending of garments, and gnashing of teeth? Those are the sounds of Cavaliers fans bemoaning the (supposed) disaster that was Draft Night 2008. The selection of 19-year old power forward J.J. Hickson, you see, is a grim herald of the end-times for professional basketball in Cleveland. In two years LeBron will be dunking, dishing out dimes, and checking his mouth for imaginary blood in a Brooklyn Nets uniform. The entire franchise will be gone to Vegas, or Ketchikan, or somewhere other than here at any rate. Danny Ferry is either a demon spawned for the express purpose of destroying the Cavaliers- twice over- or a drooling idiot who takes the short bus to the Q every day. We're doomed, whoa is us, etc, etc, etc.

Now, I don't believe in demons, and I don't see how a Duke graduate, the son of a longtime NBA executive, and a protégé of Gregg Popovich and R.C. Buford can reasonably be considered an idiot. My guess is that most of the complainers were fixated on a certain player- Chris Douglas-Roberts, Darrell Arthur, Kosta Koufos,

or Courtney Lee- hadn't done their homework on J.J. Hickson, may not have even known who the hell he was, and were blindsided. I know that comes off as condescending and there are undoubtedly folks out there who have reservations about this pick from an educated angle. But I just can't find another explanation- other than *"that's Cleveland!"-* for why there's *this* much message-board consternation over a guy who was rated 20th on Jay Bilas's board and 21st on Chad Ford's. This is hardly the equivalent of burning a lottery pick on DeSagana Diop.

I'm not going to sit here and tell you this was a great pick. Not just because you can't judge a draft for a couple of years down the road- although that's part of it- but because I don't know enough about J.J. Hickson to make that kind of assessment. Frankly, I don't watch a lot of college basketball: I follow Kent State and the MAC semi-religiously, but the rest of it I kind of re-discover on a yearly basis in early February. N.C. State was terrible last season, so they weren't exactly on TV more than "Leave it to Beaver" re-runs, to borrow Pete Gillen's phrase. I don't know anything about this kid, other than the information gleaned from his ESPN player card: that he led the Wolfpack in scoring and rebounding; that he shot 59 percent from the field and just under 68 percent from the line; that he had ten double-doubles, including a 13-point, 23-rebound night against Clemson and a 27-14 against Miami in the ACC Tournament.

Here is what I also know- or at any rate, what I *think* I know:

The Cavaliers have three glaring weaknesses. They lack a true playmaking point guard who can consistently break down defenses and

create easy opportunities for his teammates; they lack an athletic wing player who can create his own offense; and they lack a low-post banger. They still haven't addressed the first or second weakness. But in J.J. Hickson, they have addressed the third- or at least, they've attempted to. They've also injected some much-needed youth into an aging front line and provided a backstop for the expected departure of Anderson Varejao (hopefully as part of a trade which delivers a certain ex-backcourt mate of Scoonie Penn's from the 1999 Ohio State Final Four team).

It isn't the sexiest pick Danny Ferry could have made. But this team needs a young, physical presence down low, and J.J. Hickson has a chance to provide it. This isn't an out-of-left-field pick in the slightest.

By the way, for your viewing pleasure, here's a Youtube clip of Hickson hanging 33 and 13 on Western Carolina early last season.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S5bHsI70bts

Granted, the Catamounts went 10-21 and finished near the bottom of the Southern Conference, so it wasn't as if the competition was especially stringent. Still, it's nice to see the kid display some low-post moves. It's been a while since we saw those around here. Z's array of glacial pump-fakes and Andy's "Tragic Johnson"* game certainly don't qualify.

**- Urban Dictionary defines "Tragic Johnson" as a sadly*

undersized part of the male anatomy. Where I come from, it's a nickname for a basketball player who habitually drives to the hoop with a variety of crossovers and behind-the-back moves, but can't finish for squat. Andy's spin-and-scoop on Tim Duncan in Game Three of the 2007 Finals is the epitome of "Tragic Johnson."

Lastly, and the best reason to get a grip- the future of the franchise isn't riding on this kid. The Cavaliers are already a pretty good team, and might be a *really* good team by November, depending on what else transpires this off-season. We don't need J.J. Hickson to step in and dominate. If he can give us 10 to 15 minutes a night, if he can take a little bit of pressure off our cadre of thirty-something big men, if he can be Paul Milsap with the promise of something more down the road, it's gravy.

No need to shake our fists at the heavens just yet. Let's see how this plays out, and go from there.