Over the past five years, many Cavaliers fans became convinced that this team wasn't going to win an NBA title until Danny Ferry acquired an offense-initiating point guard who could allow LeBron James to move without the ball. If the lack of a true point guard was the chasm that separated the Cavs from the likes of the Spurs and Celtics, consider contention achieved as of Wednesday afternoon, when the Cavs acquired Maurice "Mo" Williams from the Milwaukee Bucks as part of a six-player, three team trade that also included the as-yet-unnamed Oklahoma City franchise. Papa Cas gives us his thoughts on the deal.

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acquired Maurice "Mo" Williams from the Milwaukee Bucks as part of a six-player, three team trade that also included the as-yet-unnamed Oklahoma City franchise.

Williams is the only player the Cavs received in the trade. The Bucks received Damon Jones and his expiring contract from the
Cavs
, Oklahoma City point guard Luke
Ridnour
and
OKC
forward Adrian Griffin. Oklahoma City received Joe Smith's expiring contract from the
Cavs

and Desmond Mason from the Bucks.

It's actually a coming-home party of sorts for Mason, in more ways than one. He started his career with the Seattle Sonics and will now be reunited with the franchise in their new city. Mason also played for the Hornets while the franchise temporarily played home games in Oklahoma City from 2005-07.

Before we focus on what the Cavs got in Williams, let's look at what they lost in Jones and Smith.

Jones was signed in 2005 to be the three-point sniper off the bench, but never really fit into the offense in Cleveland the way he did in Miami. His three years with the Cavs were marked by inconsistent shooting and an attitude that seemed to change with the prevailing winds, or with his minutes-per-game average.

There is reason to believe he and Mike Brown were not on the best of terms this past season, which wouldn't be a surprise given Jones' outspoken nature. Combine that with the fact that Jones became a redundant player when Daniel Gibson emerged as the team's primary three-point sniper, and you had an unhappy, mismatched puzzle piece of a player. His days in Cleveland had been numbered for quite some time. I had a hard time believing the Cavs would open training camp with Jones still on the roster.

The loss of Smith hurts a bit more. He was a solid contributor off the bench for the Cavs' 13-game playoff run this past spring. While Ben Wallace and Zydrunas Ilga uskas
nursed their bodies along through assorted injuries, it was Smith who provided consistent scoring and rebounding from the low post positions.

Smith is already on the wrong side of 30 and probably won't improve beyond what he did for the Cavs this spring, so perhaps the Cavs are trading him at the right time. His departure will undoubtedly open the door for first-round pick J.J. Hickson
and second-round pick Darnell Jackson to win minutes at the season's outset. But I'd honestly still feel better if the
Cavs
signed another veteran big man before the season starts, someone who can absorb 20 minutes a night if need be.

Asking Hickson or Jackson to step in and shoulder big minutes right away might work out just fine, but it's a gamble to rely on two rookies so heavily, especially when you consider that Hickson won't even turn 20 until September.

Now for the main course. Mo Williams: A player who, by the simple act of putting on a Cavs uniform, will become the best point guard the franchise has seen since Andre Miller -- or maybe even Terrell Brandon.

Like a lot of NBA ball-handlers, Williams doens't fit the often-referenced "pure point guard." He's not a pass-first assist machine who will exist solely to pump up LeBron's nightly stat line. But that doesn't make him less valuable. In fact, Williams might be more valuable to the Cavs than a pass-first point guard.

Williams is a scorer with a good enough handle to play the point guard position. Not to play fast and loose with invoking the name of Larry Hughes, but Williams is everything the Cavs wanted Hughes to be. Williams can create his own shot and do it often, a quality that has been almost completely absent from the players who have surrounded LeBron to this point.

The Cavs certainly needed a point guard who can play pitch-and-catch with LeBron, passing to LeBron while he is cutting to the basket and completely unstoppable. But as much as they needed a point guard like that, perhaps even more so, they needed a second player who could create off the dribble and serve as an ignition switch for the offense.

Williams can do that. He did so to the tune of 17.2 points and 6.3 assists last season. If Williams can continue to put up those kinds of numbers, the days of stand-and-dribble offense as a team philosophy should be a thing of the past.

Williams might not be in the uppermost echelon of NBA point guards. He's not quite in the class of Chris Paul, Steve Nash or Deron Williams. But he's in the class right behind them, on a short list with Jose Calderon, Gilbert Arenas and an

aging Chauncey Billups as an elite point guard in the Eastern Conference.

Williams isn't Michael Redd, Elton Brand or another wow-factor acquisition like many fans were hoping for this summer. But make no mistake about it, his acqusition is a significant one, an addition that has the chance to vault the Cavs back into NBA Finals contention next spring.

But as with any major addition, Williams does come with a price. His hefty contract will weigh on the Cavs' books for up to the next half-decade. He is signed for up to five more years and a total of about $43 million. That includes an $8.5 million player option for the 2012-13 season. But the upside is, if LeBron develops good chemistry with Williams, he knows he'll be here for a while.

Maybe Williams' presence won't influence whether LeBron stays with or leaves the Cavs. But anytime you can add a quality player to his supporting cast, it probably can't hurt your chances if you're Ferry.

What matters right now is that when LeBron steps off the return flight from China in a couple of weeks, he'll come back to a Cavs team that is noticeably improved over the team he last saw. Williams isn't a cure-all, but if wins and losses end up being the ultimate deciding factor as to LeBron's future home team, acquiring Williams should be a step in the right direction.

*P.S. I just wanted to draw some additional attention to the byline in the linked column. After nearly two months, Brian Windhorst is out of the hospital and back on the Cavs beat for the Akron Beacon Journal. On behalf of Cavs fans everywhere, welcome back, Brian. We missed you.*