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Drastic times call for drastic measures.

With the Cavs facing the western conference power New Orleans Hornets at 'The Q' on Friday night without the benefit of Zydrunas Ilgauskas and Delonte West in uniform, and with starting power forward Ben Wallace still limited by the flu, the home team needed some help.

With just the click of a mouse I gave it to them.

A small bet on the Hornets getting 3 points was all it took to ensure a 92-78 blow out Cavalier victory.

LeBron James led the way (copied and pasted from every other Cavalier recap) with 29 points. It's also no coincidence that Friday night was the night LBJ grabbed a season high 14 rebounds. 23 has a tendency to understand the situation and he was acutely aware that with Z out and Wallace limited that he was needed on the glass. Just for kicks and giggles James dished out 7 assists in

43 minutes. All of that came a night after an OT loss to the Bulls in which James logged 44 minutes and after which the Cavs team plane was delayed 2 hours due to weather.

LBJ is progressing nicely, no?

James got some help Friday night from a couple guys whose time has come to step up and be productive. Sasha Pavlovic, starting in place of West, scored 19 points in 43 minutes, including a perfect 4/4 from 3-point range. Pavlovic also chipped in 6 boards and a couple steals in his best game in recent memory.

Wally Szczerbiak also came through in a big way. Szczerbiak knocked down four out of his five 3-point attempts on his way to a 14 point, 4 rebound night.

It was a rough, frustrating night for the Hornets. Chris Paul scored 18 points on 5/14 shooting (including 0/4 from deep) and earned himself an early dismissal from the proceedings by picking up a couple technical fouls as a result of his incessant whining. James Posey also was disqualified for a couple James Posey-like infractions that included belting Mo Williams to the deck about 5 seconds after a whistle. David West led the Hornets with 23 points.

The Cavs ran their home record to 20-0 with the win over the Hornets. That's damn near perfect.

Takeaways

- Well, if Sasha and Wally can go for 33 and 10 every night while shooting 90% or so from beyond the arc, this Delonte West injury will be a non-issue. What were we so worried about?

- In all seriousness, the win Friday night was one of the better Cavalier efforts of the season. Down 2 ½ starters and coming off an emotional OT loss to the Bulls the night before, while the Hornets were warm and comfortable in their Cleveland hotel rooms, the Cavs came out with purpose, intensity and resolve. The Cavs controlled the pace and the tempo all night long, jumped on the Hornets early by knocking down open shots and defensively frustrated a team that can put up some points.

Friday night was another example of this team's growth, depth and ability. And it never hurts to have a superstar who recognizes what has to be done and who can then go out and dictate that it get done.

- "Paging Mr. Varejao. Mr. Varejao, please report to the court where the season continues to be played." Let's give AV the benefit of the doubt. All players not named LeBron will have 2 or 3 game spells where nothing goes in the basket and everything is out of rhythm. Varejao is hopefully going through one of those blue periods now. He was AWOL against the Bulls and the Hornets and with the Lakers and Portland looming in the next week or so the Cavs are going to need Wild Thing in full-blown annoying and productive mode. I'd much rather these past two games be a blip on AV's otherwise solid season than to think maybe AV's being laid bare by opposing teams who have discovered he's dependent on all other Cavalier parts to be operating optimally for him to be effective.

- The Cavs have a tough stretch coming up in the next couple weeks; especially given they're without Z and West. Their next 11 games have them matched up against the Lakers twice, Portland, Utah, Orlando and the Pistons. The first 4 of that 11 game set are on the road. It's going to take some very good basketball to maintain their top position in the Eastern Conference. If they can somehow hang onto the conference's one-seed after the next 11 games it's going to be tough for anyone to wrestle it away the rest of the season.

They Got Next

It's LBJ and Kobe on Monday night in Los Angeles (1030pm TNT). The Cavs then go up to play Portland on Wednesday night (10pm), to Golden State Friday night (1030pm) and then get the Jazz in Utah on Saturday night (9pm) to end their 4 game western swing.