Cleveland's 104-98 win over the Trail Blazers Wednesday night in Portland's Rose Garden might not have been the biggest of the year, but it wasn't just any win, that's for sure. The Cavaliers were coming off a rather demoralizing beat-down to the Lakers in L.A. and with back-to-back games in Golden State and Utah coming up this weekend, were staring down the barrel of what had the potential to dissolve into a disastrous road swing. Instead the Cavaliers, like title contenders, stepped up.

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Instead the Cavaliers, like title contenders, stepped up. They got the requisite massive game from LeBron, the best scoring night of the season from Mo Williams, some yeoman efforts by the supporting cast, some help from a Portland team that couldn't shoot straight, and gutted it out through a harrowing fourth quarter in front of a Rose Garden crowd that has to rank right up there with the loudest and most boisterous in the Association.

A big win, and worth staying up late to watch, that's for sure. How does 32-8 grab you?

It's a Flaming... Mo. Yeah, that's it. A Flaming Mo: On a night when the Cavaliers were short-handed and needed a hero, or at any rate another hero aside from the superman wearing #23, Mo Williams more than filled the bill. White-hot all night, Mo went for a season-high 33 points on just 19 shots, hitting 12, including 6-of-9 from three-point range. 12 of his points came in the fourth quarter, including two daggers from downtown in a span of 1:14 that helped kill any chance at a Portland comeback. The Blazers ran multiple men at LeBron down the stretch, giving Mo good looks at the basket, and he made them pay. To be fair, Mo was also made to look ridiculous at times by Portland rookie Jerryd Bayless on the other end, but it's hard to quibble when the guy is giving you 33 points on 19 shots.

LeBron's Line: 34 points on 14-of-30 from the field, with 14 assists and seven rebounds. He started off scorching from outside, and when his shot cooled off early in the fourth period, he had the presence of mind to start driving aggressively to the hoop and find his teammates for open shots, particularly Mo Williams. After sloppy performances against the Bulls and Lakers, LeBron committed only two turnovers on Wednesday. Thirty shots are a little excessive, and he did get jumper-happy in the middle periods of the game, but like he usually does, LBJ ultimately made the winning plays.

The Supporting Cast: LeBron and Mo handled the bulk of the scoring load on Wednesday, while other Cavaliers turned in solid efforts in the other areas of the game. Anderson put together a nice 12-point, 8-rebound night and more than held his own against Greg Oden, getting the ex-Buckeye in foul trouble and in general being his usual pest-like self. Sasha played decent defense on Brandon Roy and stuffed the stat sheet with 6 points, 4 boards, and 4 assists. Wally had 10 rebounds- that's right, *10*- and helped the undersized Cavaliers to a 39-35 edge on the boards. Ben Wallace had only 4 points and 3 rebounds, but put in the biggest bucket of the night and logged a game-high +20 in his 28 minutes of work. To paraphrase Abe Lincoln, while Mo and LeBron skinned the hog, everyone else held down a leg.

Scorching: The Cavaliers shot 52.6 percent from the field and hot 11-of-19 three-pointers. On Monday night they started off hot against the Lakers, cooled off, and were dominated down the stretch. On Wednesday they never cooled off. Portland countered by shooting a frosty 40.7 percent from the floor.

They're Not There Yet: Brandon Roy, LeMarcus Aldridge, and Greg Oden are three of the brightest young stars in the Association, but they didn't exactly shine like Alpha Centauri on Wednesday night. Roy went just 8-for-23 from the field, including several crucial misses from close in that helped abort Portland's late comeback attempt. Aldridge was way off on several wide-open jumpers and finished 8-for-20. Oden, who is fourth in the league in fouls committed per game, played just 25 minutes before fouling out for the fourth time this season. The Blazers lost when they were facing an opponent without 40 percent of its starting lineup, at home, on a night when they shot 33 free throws to Cleveland's 15. A serious team wins that game. Portland isn't serious yet.

Play of the Night, Part I: With 2:19 to play in the first half, Mo found LeBron for an alley-oop to put the Cavaliers up, 45-38. After landing, LBJ stopped and spread his arms for the crowd, which, not inclined to throw rose petals at the feet of the King, responded with a shower of boos. My guess is that LeBron won't be getting any Target Center-style standing ovations from the fans in Portland anytime soon, for which I most decidedly do not blame them.

Play of the Night, Part II: With under eight minutes to play in the fourth period and the Cavaliers clinging to a 79-77 lead, LeBron, who was being hounded by Brandon Roy, retreated almost to the time-line, turned back to the basket, drove, switched to his left hand, and took the entire Portland team to the rack for a reverse lay-up that was nothing short of exquisite. The play was even more satisfying seeing as it followed a long stretch in which LeBron, as is his habit at times, became all too enamored with his jump shot- which, admittedly, was falling early.

Play of the Night, Part III: This might have been the biggest play of all for the

Cavaliers, and it happened to be made by their least proficient offensive player. Portland had just taken an 82-81 lead midway through the fourth quarter on a three-point play by Brandon Roy, and with the momentum, crowd, and officials all on the side of the Blazers, things looked bleak for Cleveland- bleaker still after Sasha Pavlovic came up short on a fifteen-foot jumper on the other end. But Ben Wallace fought his way to the boards, got his hands on the ball, and threw it back up, where it hemmed and hawed on the rim for a couple of seconds before saying, *"Ah, what the hell"* and dropped through the net, giving the Cavaliers the lead back, 83-82, with 6:04 to play. As it turned out, they would not trail again the rest of the way.

Play of the Night, Part IV: With a little over a minute left, leading 95-90, and needing one more bucket to put a coat of sealant on the game, the Cavaliers ran a deep pick-and-pop with LeBron and Mo. Mo picked and drifted beyond the three-point line, LeBron found him, and Mo buried the dagger that put Cleveland up 98-90 and just about salted things away for the Wine & Gold.

Could be Dozens... Could be Thousands: I have no idea how many times Austin Carr exclaimed "DEEP... in the Rose Garden" on Wednesday night, just that it was somewhere between "a gazillion" and "a shitload." If you were taking a drink every time he said it, congratulations- you just died of alcohol poisoning.

Bronze this Stat! The Cavaliers are the only team left in the NBA that hasn't had a losing streak this season. Each of their eight losses has been followed by a victory.

Next Up: The Cavaliers take on the Golden State Warriors, 10:30 on Friday night in Oakland. A win over Don Nelson's team locks up a .500 record for the road trip, not too bad at all considering the circumstances.

Correction: In my column from Monday, I omitted a couple of game-winning

shots from LeBron's career catalogue- the driving lay-up with 0.3 left to beat the Blazers last January, and the lay-up that won Game 5 against the Pistons in the 2007 Eastern Conference Finals. I really should have remembered the shot against Portland- after all I recapped the game for TCF.