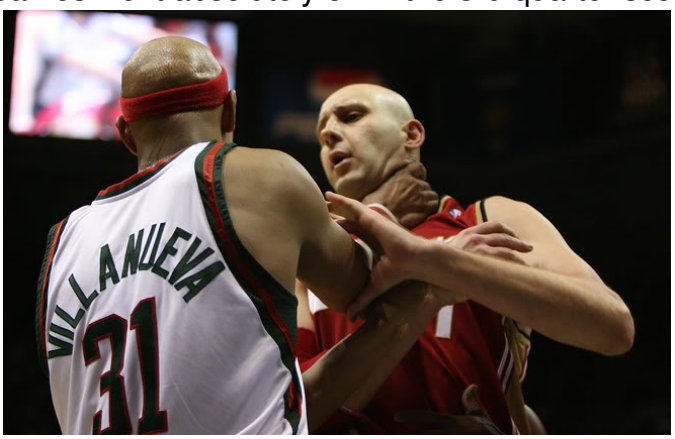
Looking like they'd rather be anywhere else on the globe rather than in Milwaukee on a February Friday night, the Cavs were on the wrong side of a 56-51 halftime score. Then LeBron James and all hell broke loose. James went absolutely off in the 3rd quarter scoring 24 points, including 18 points in the first 5



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Then LeBron James and all hell broke loose.

James went absolutely off in the 3rd quarter scoring 24 points, including 18 points in the first 5 ½ minutes of the quarter. LBJ caught fire from deep and buried five 3-pointers to erase that lead and give the Cavs a 14 point lead against a staggered Milwaukee club. James scored 55 on the night and also dealt out 9 assists as the Cavs moved to 42-11 on the year.

To their credit, the Bucks mounted a late 3rd quarter surge of their own to get the game right back to even. The catalyst for the Bucks was Charlie Villanueva. Villanueva scored 26 points and hauled down 13 boards before being overcome by stupidity. With the game in the balance in the 4th quarter Villanueva was assessed a flagrant foul 2 for grabbing Anderson Varejao by the face and throwing him to the floor. A minor melee followed that saw Zydrunas Ilgauskas come to the aid of Varejao and get right up in the chest of Villanueva. Not content with nearly killing Varejao, Villanueva went all Latrell Sprewell on Z and tried to apply his best choke hold. Order was restored when an official basically tackled

Villanueva and the Bucks biggest producer was escorted off the court.

Z was assessed a technical foul but remained in the game and moments later hit a sideline three ball to really take the air out of Milwaukee.

Just another night of Midwestern style basketball.

Takeaways

- James actually shot a higher percentage from 3-point range (8/11 for 73%) than he did from the free throw line (15/22 for 68%). To say he was feeling it is an understatement of epic proportions. James set the stage for his massive 3rd quarter by hitting a 35 foot 3-pointer at the 2nd quarter buzzer that took the Cavs deficit from 9 points down to 6 points.

The momentum from that buzzer beater was huge. Because, as noted above, the Cavs were a step slow and more than a little bit disinterested defensively for nearly the entire first half.

After the buzzer beater and after regrouping at halftime the Cavs came out possessed to start the 3rd quarter. That's a good sign if you're a Cavs fan. That tells you that there is some pride and some passion in the chests of the guys taking the floor. This was a game that could have easily gotten away from them on the road and against a team playing well at the present time.

- It was just another All-Star caliber performance from Mo William in support of James. Williams went back to his old stomping grounds and dropped 23 point on his old mates. Included in that 23 was a 3/6 effort from three point range as well as 6 assists. There was no one in the building enjoying LBJ's performance more than Williams. And hitting a few huge shots of his own capped off the evening nicely.

- It's not usually good news when the Cavaliers launch 26 three point shots. But when you have James going nuclear from deep and

Williams hitting 50% of his tries you end up converting 13 of the 26 for 50% on the night.

- Not everything was buzzer beaters and roses on the night. The Cavs average about 13 turnovers per game for the season and they were damn near there by the half. 18 turnovers overall against a scrappy team make for some uneasy moments and the Cavs righted the ship in the nick of time to get out of the Bradley Center with a win.

- Not to pile on a guy gutting his way through an injury filled season, but Daniel Gibson handles the basketball like it's a scalding hot kettle of pus. If someone isn't poking away his dribble then Boobie is channeling his best John Morton and dribbling the ball off some part of his own body.

- It's hard for a man who is 7'3" tall to disappear on a basketball court, but Zydrunas Ilgauskas did just about that for 3 ½ quarters.

However, the big Lithuanian sure did make an impact in the last 7 minutes of the ballgame.

Z ended up 5/8 from the field including that huge 3-pointer late in the 4th quarter after the WWE act ad gone down. The 3-pointer was nice, but Z immediately coming to the aid and defense of Varejao was even better to see. There was no hesitation at all from Ilgauskas as he set sail with purpose for Villanueva. It's heartening to see that the days of Cavaliers being splattered all over basketball courts across the country while their teammates stand around looking down at their shoes is over. Not too many guys on the squad other than maybe Ben Wallace and Darnell Jackson are likely to win a Tough Man contest but you have to defend yourself and your teammates when the crap hits the fan or you're going to get treated like sissies and punks every time you take the court.

Ilgauskas took it upon himself to serve notice that if you knock down one guy you're going to have to scrape four more off of you.

They Got Next

The Cavs get the reeling Pistons at home on Sunday night (8pm) and then host the Grizzlies Tuesday evening (7pm) at ‘The Q'. After that it's cowboy hats and country music as Clev eland heads to Houston and San Antonio.