Tuesday's perfunctory 94-79 thrashing of Memphis on Tuesday night gave the Cavaliers their best start after 55 games in franchise history at 44-11, one-upping the 43-12 record of the 1988-89 team. In every other way it was a routine, businesslike evening. Cleveland never trailed after the 10:44 mark of the first quarter, when Mo Williams scored to break a 2-2 tie. The Cavaliers led by 11 after one, by 22 at halftime, and were ahead by as many as 26 points before cruising in over the Grizzlies. Jesse Lamovksy recaos the win.

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It was a nice, easy affair- just what this team needed as it prepares for the badlands that are the next ten-games.

Kick off Your Shoes and Relax Your Feet: LeBron James could have spent the fourth quarter partying on down to the Xscape beat if he'd so chosen. He sat the entire stanza on the bench, part of a relatively light night that saw him post 15

points on 4-of-10 shooting with eight assists and five rebounds. With Memphis putting up token resistance virtually from the opening tip, LBJ didn't need to be heroic for the Cavaliers to win with perfunctory ease.

Why Doesn't He Do That More: Early in the third quarter with Memphis on a 4-1 surge that cut their 24-point deficit to a manageable 21, LeBron curled around a screen, took a pass from Mo Williams, and stroked a three-pointer that made it 64-40 Cavaliers, putting a cruel end to the comeback hopes of the Grizzlies. That shot from the wing, when he's off the ball, is to me by far LeBron's best-percentage shot. I say "to me" because I don't have the statistics and won't anytime soon. It just seems that the shot looks better and goes in more when it's taken off the ball in that area of the floor. Trenchant analysis, I know.

Picking up the Slack: Mo Williams and Daniel Gibson made sure Delonte's absence didn't cause a pinch on the offensive end. The two were Cleveland's scoring leaders on the night, Mo putting in 18 on 6-of-12 (3-of-5 from the land of three) and Boobie scoring 19 on 8-of-14 shooting. The ball movement was top-notch: Cleveland racked up 24 assists on 31 made baskets, with LeBron dropping eight dimes, Mo adding six, and Wally Szczerbiak making up for a rough shooting night with six more.

Score to Settle: The Kinsey Report met up with his former team on Tuesday night as he started in place of Delonte West. He wasn't awful either, scoring 11 points and helping to hound O.J. Mayo into a miserable night. He let a pair of perfect LeBron James passes bounce right off his hands and put up by far the worst plus-minus of any Cavalier starter (+1) but that's why he's the fifth guard when this team's backcourt is healthy.

Speaking of O.J. Mayo: Memphis has finished up its two-game slate against the Cavaliers, which was two games too many for the rookie phenom from USC. Mayo shot a combined 6-of-20 against Cleveland and scored a total of 13 points. His six points in the January 13 game are a season low, and his seven on Tuesday is tied for second-lowest. He came into the night averaging 19.4 points

on 44 percent shooting. Pierce, Kobe, D-Wade and Joe Johnson might be issues in the spring, but at least this team has the O.J. Mayo conundrum licked.

Hey, You Can't Hit That Shot: Former Ohio State Buckeye Mike Conley has been handed the keys to Memphis's lead-guard spot, and he handled it pretty well against the Cavaliers. Conley scored 12 points, handed out 7 assists with only one turnover, and even hit a couple of three-pointers, an area of the game he was never known for at Ohio State. With Rudy Gay ordinary and O.J. Mayo (3-of-11, 7 points) less so, Conley, along with Marc Gasol, were the only Grizzlies who impressed. I haven't watched Conley since OSU's Tournament run two years ago. He was a smooth performer then, still is, and if that jump shot is fer' real, he's going to play well for someone, if not the woeful Grizzlies.

Speaking of the Woeful Grizzlies: What's with the recent custom of the NBA taking teams out of first-rate cities and transferring them to second-rate towns? This year it's been the Sonics leaving lush, cosmopolitan Seattle for Oklahoma City, and in 2001 it was the Grizzlies leaving Vancouver, one of the great cities of the world (so I'm told) for shabby Memphis. What's next- the league puts a team in Paris and after five years lets them move to Birmingham, Alabama?

Yes, I'm from Cleveland, and I'm talking junk about other cities. But I'm really not. All I'm saying is that Vancouver-Memphis and Seattle-Okay City are not lateral moves in the slightest. I know Vancouver didn't care about the NBA, but when you're 15-41, you're going to inspire apathy in any locale you choose to make home.

Was there ever a franchise more doomed to fail than the Vancouver Grizzlies? They started out in a hockey town in a foreign country with Stu Jackson as their first coach and Big Country Reeves as their first franchise player. They were hamstrung by the NBA's expansion guidelines, which barred them from the first overall pick for three years no matter how badly they sucked. The 1996-97 Grizzlies lost 68 games, and they didn't even have a *chance* to land Tim Duncan. They weren't even in the right division- they were in the Midwest, not the Pacific,

home to would-be Great Northwest rivals Seattle and Portland. That franchise was born with a 0-2 count and 98-mile an hour heat coming in at the knees.

It's Good to Be Home: The Cavaliers went 24-of-29 from the free-throw stripe on Tuesday. Memphis went 6-of-11.

Nice Game, Kid: J.J. Hickson came off the bench to tally 10 points- three more than his heralded rookie counterpart and fellow Initials-as-Names All-Star O.J. Mayo- and added a career-high nine rebounds in 28 active minutes.

Around the League: Orlando's 120-102 loss in Chicago moved the Cavaliers three-and-a-half games ahead of the Magic, while Detroit's loss in Miami reduced the magic number for clinching the division to 10. The Lakers won in Oklahoma City, so as of Wednesday morning, the Cavaliers still trail L.A. by two games- one in the loss column- in the race for home-court throughout.

Also, for what it's worth, the Cavaliers need to go 16-11 in their last 27 games to reach the 60-win mark for the first time in franchise history.

Next: The Cavaliers start a four-game in five-night road trip against the Rockets in Houston Thursday night at 8:00.