Some cynical NBA fans think that you can tune in for the last five minutes of any given game and see the "important" part. The Cavs' drubbing of the Boston Celtics earlier this afternoon is a great example of why that philosophy is so flawed. If you'd skipped the first quarter, you would have missed the game's most competitive stretch. The Cavs absolutely destroyed the Celtics, 107-76, and Nick Allburn talks about the win in his latest piece for us.

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It was a beat down of epic proportions, as the Cavs basically ended the game in one quarter, much to the delight of a rollicking sellout crowd at The Q. It was one of the best defensive displays of the season for the Cavs, which must have been a pleasant Easter surprise for Coach Brown.

Early on, the Cavs seemed determined to push the ball up the floor and turn their defensive stops into points, and they appeared to be practically daring the Celtics to match their pace. The Cavs don't make a concerted effort to run very often, and it's good to know that they have the ability to wear down a Celtics team who, quite frankly, looked tired.

The Cavs took leads of 22 and 19 points into the first and second quarter breaks, respectively, and even a 14-3 run to close the half couldn't get the Celtics back within striking distance. It was less than two weeks ago when the Cavs were embarrassed by the Orlando Magic, and you got the feeling they were returning the favor, except to their other Eastern Conference adversary. With or without Kevin Garnett, the Cavs were making a statement with this win; letting the rest of the East know that if they want to play the Western Conference champs (*cough -- Lakers*) in the Finals, they'll have to get through Cleveland, Ohio.

Final: Cleveland 107, Boston 76

Box Score

Quick Hits

It's good to be the King.

Twenty-nine points on just 15 shots. Efficiency, thy name is LeBron James. It was another dominating performance from LBJ, which included a couple of dunks, a first quarter fast break block of Ray Allen, and a 5-of-8 shooting performance from deep. If LeBron's making his jump shot, there's nothing hyperbolic about calling him unstoppable.

And we shouldn't look past a 6-of-6 performance from the free throw line, either. LeBron has now shot 80-percent or higher from the line in 8 of the last 10 games, including a 10-of-10 performance in the Orlando debacle on April 3rd. LeBron's often his own worst enemy at the free throw line, as maintaining his focus is the only thing that prevents him from consistently shooting 80-percent or higher, but it looks like he's making a concerted effort to improve at the stripe as we head into the postseason. That's bad news for the rest of the East.

Finally, as I mentioned above, LeBron was burying three-pointers, making 5-of-8. LeBron shooting threes is comparable to former Indianw Kenny Lofton hitting a homer for the Tribe; while it was great to see Lofton hit a round-tripper, you worried that he'd be swinging for the fences for the next dozen games. With LeBron, whose 33.9-percent three-point shooting percentage is nothing special, you worry that making a couple of threes will lead him to fall in love with the jumper and shy away from driving to the hoop.

While that's always a concern, there are reasons for LeBron to take an occasional, albeit infrequent, three-point shot. First, LeBron needs to trust his jumper. If that jump shot is falling, he's nothing short of unstoppable, and he needs to continue developing his jump shot, something which simply can't be done exclusively at practice.

Second, if LeBron doesn't make or at least attempt a three once in awhile, it doesn't keep opposing defenses honest. LeBron's pump fake becomes less effective, which in turn stifles his ability to drive inside. Instead of having to face him in the open court, opposing defenders can wait for James in the lane and collapse on him with a double team. In short, you don't want LeBron taking eight three-pointers like he did today, but he needs to take a handful every game when the right opportunities present themselves.

Low blow.

Following a foul shot in the third quarter, Anderson Varejao and Ray Allen got their arms tangled up, causing Varejao to throw Allen to the ground. It was a physical play on Varejao's part, but far from dirty. Jesus Shuttlesworth responded by elbowing A/V in the nether regions, which you can see in these highlights . Allen should have been ejected for the move, but the refs didn't catch it, and it only resulted in offsetting technical fouls being called on Allen and Varejao. In the words of Austin Powers, "I don't care how evil he is, you don't give a man a shot in the pills."

Allen was clearly venting some frustration from being on the wrong side of the slaughter, but there's still no room for a move like that. It would be disappointing if the league doesn't hand down some kind of fine or suspension when they review the video.

Varejao is something of a poor man's Rodman (or rich man's Rodman, depending on your taste in hair) when it comes to getting into opponents' heads, and it's part of the reason he's often involved in these little skirmishes. It's not his fault, but it's the way things are. Varejao also doesn't back down from conflicts on the court, as he's quick to defend his teammates and/or himself if the situation calls for it. That's a compliment, by the way. Opponents need to know that your team isn't soft, and that they can't get away with dirty fouls, especially when you have a player as valuable as LeBron James on the floor.

Pouring it on.

Although it goes against conventional wisdom, I actually would have played the starters deeper into the second half to deliver more of a mental drubbing to the Celtics, especially after Ray Allen pulled his little maneuver in the third quarter. It turned out that the Cavs' reserves were just as capable as their starting counterparts, and there was no fourth quarter letdown.

Whether teams admit it or not, getting embarrassed like that sticks with you, and puts a little doubt in the back of your mind as to whether or not you can really hang with that particular opponent. That's why I'm so glad the Cavs bullied the Celtics today, and why I'm a little worried about what could happen in a potential Eastern Finals match up with Orlando, given what went down two weeks ago in Mickey Mouse's backyard.

Boobie tease?

Daniel Gibson received more heavy minutes tonight, playing more than all but three of the starters. Gibson rewarded Mike Brown's confidence with a 15-point performance (his highest output since February) on a very efficient 5-of-6 shooting.

Gibson's been showing flashes about every other game for the last couple of weeks. While I'm not totally sold on Boobie having turned the corner, it's encouraging to see his jumper falling, and it's also good to see him shooting with confidence. We've seen Gibson struggle in the past when he wasn't confident in his shot, and maybe he's starting to believe in his abilities again.

If Gibson can return to '07-'08 form in time for the playoffs it would be terrific, as he has the ability to be a real spark plug for this team off the bench. But if today's performance was just a mirage, there's a pretty good insurance policy in Wally Szczerbiak who's ready to roll if needed.

You've come a long way, baby.

It's easy to forget how much the Cavaliers have struggled to put together

consistent offense for the past few years, especially against quality opponents. In the past, the problem was significantly magnified when LeBron James was on the bench. I was reflecting on this during LeBron's usual break at the beginning of the second quarter.

Of course the Cavs don't look as good with LBJ riding the pine -- no team would -- but they still perform at a high level with Mo Williams running the offense, and taking a more assertive scoring role while LeBron rests. It wasn't long ago that giving LeBron a blow felt like killing a power play; you were just counting down until you saw number 23 head back to the scorer's table. It's amazing how far this club has come since this point last season, and how strong they look in all phases of the game, at present.

Someone just get rid of that, please.

It's been an occasional topic of conversation, but apparently we still need to talk about it, because nobody's removed "THE DIFF" from the Jumbotron at The Q yet. Jeff Van Gundy pointed out the absurdity of the completely unnecessary column, which is situated between the teams' respective scores, and informs the fans as to how many points the Cavs are leading or trailing by at any particular time.

On a quick aside, Jeff Van Gundy is growing on me as a commentator, mainly because it's increasingly funny to think of this guy coaching NBA players as it becomes more and more evident that he might just be the world's biggest goofball. I still don't always agree with Van Gundy's takes, but he's certainly candid in his observations (not unlike Charles Barkley, minus Barkley's unbelievably inflated sense of self-importance) and he's often thought-provoking. The Breen/Jackson/Van Gundy combination is a pretty good team when Jackson and Van Gundy don't go off on one of their mind-numbing tangents.

But again, someone needs to put the kibosh on "THE DIFF".

Up Next: 4/13, at Indiana Pacers, Conseco Fieldhouse, 7:00

As I write this, the Lakers have a comfortable lead over the Grizzlies, so we'll have to wait at least one more day before we can celebrate clinching the number one seed. The Cavs will have an opportunity to get it done tomorrow night in

Indianapolis, against a Pacers team that they've beaten twice in three attempts. They last played the Pacers in a February loss (96-95) which boasted one of the most bizarre finishes you'll ever see due to a pair of very questionable foul calls. The Cavs can avenge that loss, clinch the top seed, and take the season series from the Pacers all in one fell swoop. The NBA Playoffs begin on Saturday, and I can't wait. Go Cavs!