Apparently the Cavaliers defensive game plan on Tuesday night in Orlando was "Make Rafer Alston Beat Us". Consider it done. Alston, often overlooked in the Magic's frenetic offensive sets, scorched the Cavaliers for a career playoff high 26 points, 20 in the second half to help Orlando overcome an eight point halftime deficit, on a variety of three point shots and jumpers as the Magic dealt the Cavaliers a crushing overtime loss, 116-114. The win gives Orlando a commanding 3-1 series lead as the teams head back to Cleveland for Thursday's Game 5 at

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Dwight Howard actually led Orlando with 27 points and he was his normal beastly self on the blocks and in the paint. Bu the night belonged to Alston who was hot enough at one point to bank in a 25-foot three ball over a closing LeBron James.

James again led the Cavaliers with his 44 points, 12 rebounds and seven assists and it was his two clutch free throws with .5 seconds left in regulation that sent the game into overtime. But carrying this Cleveland club on his shoulders is taking a drastic toll on The King. James was visibly gassed and dragging in the overtime period where he committed a couple of key turnovers that allowed the Magic to take a six point OT lead with a minute left in the extra period. James turned the ball over eight times on the night in attempting to get to the rim and find open shooters. Those open shooters, for the most part, failed him again Tuesday night. Delonte West and Mo Williams combined for 35 points but they shot 12-30 to do it. Zydrunas Ilgauskas added 12 points and nine rebounds for Cleveland.

Even with all of that working against them the Cavaliers had a look at a long three point shot from James at the buzzer that would have won the ballgame. But like the majority of shots they've taken this series it failed to find the mark.

As a result, there is no margin for error for the Cavs if they hope to advance to the NBA Finals.

Takeaways

- Every time I close my eyes I see Magic shooters wide open from beyond the three point arc. And these guys are just not missing many shots.

One almost knew before the Magic broke their huddle out of a timeout that Rashard Lewis, or whoever took the shot with just four seconds left, was going to hit that shot.

Orlando was 17-38 from distance on Tuesday night. That's 44.7%. The Cavs shot 44.8% ***overall*** on the night. There's no surprise in regard to the Magic philosophy. They walk into the gym shooting and that's how they play the game. What's somewhat surprising is that they haven't had many off nights against the Cavs. Teams that live by the three tend to have games where those shots just don't drop or at least they go long periods without making something. The Cavs and all of Cleveland are still waiting for the Magic to have that night in this series.

Thursday night would be a fine time for the Magic to start a three game bender.

- You can see the toll taken by West's and Williams' poor shooting on a game to game basis. Their struggles are directly related to the 3-1 hole the Cavs are now in. But even more so than those individual games you can see the toll all those misses are taking on James. Forced to remain on the floor in order for any offense to be possible James is getting visibly worn down and losing confidence in his teammates. It wasn't too often during the regular season that you saw James bent at the waist or hanging onto the bottom of his shorts trying to get a breath. But it has become common place in the four games in this series thus far.

- This series is not over. The credits may be running but the series is not over. The Cavs come back home needing to sweep the board in the next three games. But it's critical that they play them one game a time. A win Thursday night sends the series back to Orlando Saturday and places the pressure to close it out squarely back on Orlando. The key remains the same though; West and Williams have got to take some of the pressure and the burden off of James.

Cleveland fans do not have to look too far back in the past to see an

example of a 3-1 series going up in flames. It does happen. And furthermore, guys like Williams and West, as well as ‘Z' can find their stroke at any time.

But clearly that time is now. Otherwise 66 regular season wins and eight straight double digit wins in the first two playoff series are going to be nothing but memories.

They Got Next

The Cavs are looking down the barrel of their first elimination game in over a year on Thursday night at ‘The Q'. TNT will carry Game 5 starting at 8:30pm. Game 6 will be Saturday night in Orlando at 830pm if one is needed. If not, let the lamenting begin.