Quick question: What's killing the Cavaliers in the Eastern Conference Finals? Is it Mo Williams not being able to hit the ocean from the end of the pier? Is it the bench players getting their lunch handed to them, game after game after game? Is it Roker Jr. throwing everything against the wall, only to see nothing stick? Answer: It's none of the above, says Jerry Roche, who gives us his thoughts on what has ailed the Cavs against the Magic so far in the Eastern Conference Finals.

Quick question: What's killing the Cavaliers in the Eastern Conference Finals?

Is it Mo Williams not being able to hit the ocean from the end of the pier? Is it the bench players getting their lunch handed to them, game after game after game? Is it Roker Jr. throwing everything against the wall, only to see nothing stick?

Answer: It's none of the above. It's Orlando's Rafer Alston, Hedo Turkoglu and Rashard Lewis sitting back in no-man's-land and sticking treys, almost at will. Whenever the Cavs make a run, the Magic unleash a barrage of three-pointers, 45 percent of which find the bottom of the net.

Part of the reason that the Cavs have lost three extremely close games is because they're gassed by the fourth quarter -- and part of the reason for that is because they spend the first three quarters running around like chickens with their heads cut off, trying (mostly in vain) to catch up with a ball that's racing around the perimeter of Orlando's offense and ultimately landing in the hands of a wide-open shooter.

Despite the Cavs' own slumps (by some of their best, most accurate shooters), they are still scoring plenty of points -- 102 per game so far, thanks mostly to MVP LBJ. What is killing them is that they're giving up 104 per game, 14 more than their regular-season average.

And why are Orlando's long-range marksmen making mincemeat of the Cavs' defense? The answer is so easy that even a guy who's never coached a basketball game in his life can figure it out. It's this: because those gunners are TOO COMFORTABLE! It's like a PICNIC out there on the perimeter, for cripe's sake!

So maybe it's time (or past time) that the Cavs take a page from the Book of Carr (Austin, that is), and lay those suckers out a few times rather than let them shoot in rhythm every friggin' time down the court.

Carr, the Cavs' current television color man, never hesitates to take his former team to task whenever an opposing player goes to the basket for an uncontested layup during the regular season. He firmly believes in old-school NBA basketball, the kind that was rampant before the players all became millionaires and started hanging around with each other during the off-season. That time-tested philosophy is to knock ‘em on their keister before they get to the iron. Maybe next time, they'll think twice, Carr contends.

Well, the Magic treat three-point shots like lay-ups, so maybe the Cavs should treat those three-pointers like lay-up attempts, too. In other words: Make ‘em pay (think Laimbeer, Rodman, Salley and Mahorn).

Consider this: The three-point shooter is stationary, out there where the defense can't reach him. The defender may be giving inside help and starts his run at the shooter from 10 feet away, only to arrive a fraction of a second too late. The defender wails at the shooter and pulls up in his face, but the shot is already away. Well, the laws of physics say that a body at rest tends to stay at rest, and a body in motion tends to stay in motion. Why, then, doesn't the body in motion (the defender) just allow himself to stay in motion another fraction of a second and clobber the shooter anyway? So what if the shooter finishes the play on his arse at mid-court? So what if the zebras even award the shooter a free throw and it ends up being a four-point play? Won't the shooter think twice -- maybe flinch a little, maybe short-arm the shot -- the next four or five times he sees a defender coming at him hell-bent for leather?

This is not dirty pool. It's not dirty basketball, either. I repeat: It's NOT DIRTY, compared with a lot of the things that go on during the course of any hotly-contested playoff series. It's simply letting the laws of physics run their course, with no real intent to bruise anything but the player's ego (and, okay, maybe his tush). We're talking physical intimidation -- nothing more, nothing less.

Had the Cavaliers employed this particular strategy in the first game of this series, they might have lost by 10 or 15 points. (Hey, wait: they lost that game anyway!) But had they been able to put dents in the chests and bruises on the backsides of Alston, Turkoglu, Lewis, *et.al.*, the odds are good that the Magic wouldn't be shooting 45 percent from trey-land. And I defy anyone to argue that the Cavs wouldn't have a commanding lead in the series if Orlando's three-point shooting percentage was 40 percent or lower.

Now -- needing three straight victories -- is it too late for the Cavaliers' brain trust (and I use the term loosely, judging by what has transpired thus far) to start pounding Orlando's bombers with a barrage of 88-millimeter lead in the persons of LeBron James, Andy Varejao, Delonte West, or even Ben Wallace, Sasha Pavlovic and Wally Szczerbiak? Maybe. After all, the Cavs now must win three in a row to advance to the NBA Finals. But what the heck -- nothing else has worked. Why not finish this series (one way or another) with a bang ... or two or three?