The Cavs offseason is all but over. Barring an unforeseen move (no, Stephen Jackson is not coming to Cleveland), all that's left to do is wait for the start of training camp, and hope that Shaq doesn't suffer a freak reality-show injury. Other than that, we can step back and take a look at the summer that was. And it was extremely active, as Danny Ferry proceeds to build his closing argument to LeBron James in advance of his 2010 free agency. The moves have both risk and reward potential -- some more than others.

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The moves have both risk and reward potential -- some more than others. But if you can't give Ferry credit for anything else, you can certainly give him credit for identifying the weaknesses on the roster that were exposed by Orlando in the Eastern Conference Finals, and taking steps to address them. And you can give Dan Gilbert credit for alloting Ferry the money to make this summer possible.

Let's take a move-by-move look at the summer of 2009, and how it will affect the upcoming edition of the Cavs.

**June 25: Cavs trade Ben Wallace, Sasha Pavlovic, a 2010 second-round pick and cash to the Suns for Shaquille O'Neal.**

Obviously, this is the marquee move of the offseason, maybe in the entire NBA. It was painfully apparent in the conference finals that the talent chasm between the Cavs' interior players and Orlando's Dwight Howard was massive. Howard abused Zydrunas Ilgauskas, Anderson Varejao and Ben Wallace over the span of the six-game series.

While it's sometimes folly to make a move to match up with one player, here it's justified. If the Cavs are going to defeat Orlando in any future playoff series, they needed someone who could at least shrink the talent chasm at the center position to a manageable rift. The same applies to matching up with the Lakers' Pau Gasol and Andrew Bynum.

**Risks:** Shaq's advancing age means injury concerns. He'll turn 38 in March, and was starting to break down physically during his final couple of years in Miami. He was rejuvenated during his year-plus in Phoenix, his physical fitness overseen by the often-celebrated Suns training staff. The Cavs have an experienced training staff of their own, but keeping Shaq's aging body spry and limber is another challenge altogether.

Even more of a question mark than Shaq's physical well-being is his budding relationship with LeBron. This is the hinge upon which the 2009-10 season will swing. Shaq and LeBron don't need to become close friends for this relationship to work, but they need to be able to forge a positive working relationship based on mutual respect and a willingness to not step on each other's toes. Unfortunately, there will probably be some degree of friction between two players with such massive egos. How they work through that friction might go a long way toward determining whether this season is a success, and whether Shaq is still a Cav after the February trade deadline.

**Rewards:** Take a player with an unprecedented combination of speed, size and power, and put him together with the most physically imposing player of the past quarter-century. If you're an opposing team, who do you defend first? That's the game of Russian roulette that every opposing coach will face when preparing for the Cavs this year.

Both Shaq and LeBron will draw double teams regularly. Most opponents will have to commit so many resources to stopping the two of them, it will leave openings all over the place for the other three players on the floor. The Cavs have probably replaced the Magic -- minus Hedo Turkoglu -- as the toughest matchup in the East.

On defense, Shaq said it best during his introductory news conference in June: "We're not doubling anyone." In other words, no more cut-and-paste defense on Howard in the post. Howard could still give Shaq fits if he gets space to operate and use his superior athleticism, but in traditional low-post,

bump-and-grind situations, Shaq is going to slow Howard down and allow his teammates to play up on their men. The Cavs now have a goalie to defend the hoop, which they didn't really have last year after Wallace broke his leg.

**June 25: NBA Draft -- Cavs selected Christian Eyenga 30th overall, Danny Green 46th overall and acquired Emir Preldzic at 57th overall**

Ferry let his Spurs black and silver show through in drafting Eyenga. The Spurs have always had an affinity for tapping international talent on draft night. Eyenga, a Congolese swingman, is still working his way up through the ranks in European ball, and will stay overseas for at least one more season. To draft Eyenga, Ferry left potentially more immediate help on the board, such as Pitt's DeJuan Blair and Sam Young.

Green, a North Carolina senior, was recently signed by the Cavs and will be a part of training camp. Preldzic, a Slovenian forward, was acquired from the Suns and will stay in Europe for the foreseeable future.

**Risks:** Eyenga is a project player, and at a time when the Cavs need immediate results, Eyenga will take time to grow into an NBA player. There were, without a doubt, more immediate solutions available at No. 30. Given that Eyenga largely flew under the radar prior to the draft, it is entirely possible that he could have slipped to 46, allowing Ferry to draft an NBA-ready player at 30.

**Rewards:** Eyenga reportedly made a positive showing during the Cavs' summer league session, indicating that he's going to find his way to the NBA sooner rather than later. And once he arrives, the 6'-6" guard-forward with the 7'-2" wingspan and excellent hops could become a star in the making.

Green will almost certainly find himself cemented to the bench for most of this season, but he has a consistent outside jumper and an ability to get his own shot, so it's not outlandish to think that he could contribute this year if needed. Green has the makings of a solid role player who could stick in the NBA for a while.

**July 13: Cavs sign guard Anthony Parker to a two-year, $6 million contract**

In the Eastern Conference Finals, the Magic exploited two glaring roster weaknesses for the the Cavs. Shaq's acquisition is aimed at addressing addressing one of them. But Orlando also exposed the Cavs' lack of tall, athletic swingmen who can make plays at both ends of the floor. The Cavs desperately needed upgrades over Pavlovic and Wally Szczerbiak, and the signing of 6'-6" Parker was the first step in improving Cleveland's non-LeBron wing game.

**Risks:** Parker wasn't Ferry's first choice. The Cavs turned to Parker when neither Ron Artest nor Trevor Ariza would take their full midlevel exception. Parker is a solid role player who starred in Europe between stints in the NBA, but he's 34. He contends that due to the fewer games played in the European season, he's been spared a couple seasons' worth of wear and tear on his body. But 34 is still 34, and he's going to have to work that much harder to keep up with the younger, faster players he'll be guarding.

**Rewards:** Age is the only real downside to Parker. He's a heady defender, good outside shooter, strong enough to drive the ball inside on occasion, and brings with him the veteran smarts gained from a long career in basketball. As a second- or third-option scorer, Parker is likely miscast. But as a jack-of-all-trades off the bench, he's an excellent fit. And all for significantly less than the Lakers and Rockets shelled out for Artest and Ariza, respectively.

**July 17: Cavs sign Heat forward Jamario Moon, a restricted free agent, to a three-year offer sheet worth nearly $9 million. On July 24, the Heat declined to match the offer, officially sending Moon to the Cavs**

Moon is the other piece of the Cavs perimeter improvement plan. Moon is 6'-8" and naturally plays small forward, but could play power forward against smaller lineups. With long arms and pogo stick legs, he can play taller than his height, and can make athletic plays around the basket. In an NBA career that has spanned just two years, he's already gained a reputation as a vicious dunker.

**Risks:** Moon didn't make his NBA debut until the age of 27. For six years following college, he lived a basketball vagabond life that included a stint with the Harlem Globetrotters. Like Parker, Moon owes his NBA career to the Raptors' willingness to take a chance on him. Unlike Parker, he was never drafted, hanging on in pro ball through his willingness to change uniforms and log air miles. In translation, that means he's always had NBA-level athletic ability, but it's been a long journey to attain an NBA-level skill set. At an age when most NBA players are beginning the back nine of their careers, Moon is still learning his NBA game.

For all his athletic ability, Moon still won't stuff a stat sheet. He's averaged nearly 27 minutes per game for his NBA career, but his scoring average stands at 7.8 points per game and his rebounds at 5.4 per game. He'll turn 30 next June, so it is logical to question how much longer he'll possess his celebrated vertical jump before Father Time starts to make withdrawals.

**Rewards:** Moon is a late bloomer, but now he's a late bloomer playing alongside LeBron -- and Moon should definitely play alongside LeBron, not just spell him as the backup small forward.

Moon is the closest thing to an athletic equal that LeBron now has on the roster. If the pair can learn to run together, they should benefit greatly from each other's size, speed and leaping ability. If Moon can maximize the scoring chances that LeBron makes for him, his scoring average could jump by several points per game. LeBron is used to flushing alley-oop passes, but with Moon on the floor, LBJ might actually get a chance to throw a few alley-oop lobs for a change.

**August 12: Cavs sign forward Leon Powe to a two-year, $1.8 million deal**

Powe is a rock-solid, hard working power forward with a critical flaw: his knees. In May, he had his third ACL reconstruction on his left knee, accompanied by a microfracture procedure. It's why the Celtics cooled considerably on one of the heroes of their 2008 NBA title run, allowing him to become an unrestricted free

agent by not tendering him a qualifying offer. In turn, that's why Powe is now a member of the Cavs. He won't be ready for game action until February at the earliest.

**Risks:** Powe's contract is minimal risk, with the second year held by the Cavs as an option. If he bounces back, he could play himself right into the Cavs' future plans. But there is still risk involved. Powe's signing basically slammed the door on any chance of re-signing Joe Smith, who left for the Hawks, lured by the possibility of more playing time.

That leaves the Cavs to rely on Darnell Jackson and J.J. Hickson, who is still fighting through back problems, to battle for minutes as the fourth big man until Powe can return -- and no one can predict the state of Powe's battered knee upon his return.

**Rewards:** Powe is a big-game player, so if he's healthy, he's a major addition for the stretch run and playoffs. He'll likely never average more than eight points and five rebounds per game due to his knees and athletic limitations. But he seems to have a knack for pulling out a 20 and 10 game right when his team needs it the most.

The Celtics benefitted greatly from Powe's spotlight performances during the past two seasons. His 21-point outburst in Game 2 of the 2008 NBA Finals will live on in Celtics lore. Hopefully Powe brought his lucky leprechaun with him to Cleveland.

**August 15: Cavs and forward Rob Kurz agree to a non-guaranteed contract**

Kurz was a non-drafted find by the Warriors last season. He's a 6'-9" power forward with three-point range on his jumper, so he could find minutes alongside Shaq if he ends up in Cleveland -- which is probable, but not certain. Kurz will

likely come to camp with the Cavs, but that could change if he somehow finds a team willing to offer him a guaranteed contract.

**Risks:** It would be a loss if Kurz signs elsewhere. In the battle for the fourth big man spot, Kurz would be a nice insurance policy on Hickson's back. He is the closest thing the Cavs would have to a "stretch four" -- an outside-shooting big man who can take some of the heat off the Cavs' frontcourt, which is stacked with bumpers, grinders, slashers and drivers who make their money close to the hoop.

**Rewards:** If you truly believe that a stretch four is a key ingredient in the Shaq championship formula, this could be the beginning of a beautiful friendship.