The Cavs were rolling along, winning seven of their last eight heading into last night's game in Memphis against the 8-12 Grizzlies. But they fell back into some bad habits, letting the Grizz come back from an 11 point halftime deficit to send the game to overtime, where they eventually beat the Cavaliers 111-109 on a runner from former Buckeye Mike Conley Jr. with three seconds remaining. Brian McPeek talks about the loss in his latest column for us.

Memphis always ranks right up there when it comes to violent crime. They don't shoot shows like "The First 48" there for no reason. And on Tuesday night the Cavs were knee-capped before blowing an 11 point halftime lead and taking two in the head in a 111-109 loss to the Grizzlies.

A lot of the wounds the Cavs sustained was self-inflicted, but in the second half Zach Randolph and Mike Conley took turns sticking daggers into the Cavaliers and a desperation three-point attempt by LeBron James in overtime came up short and failed to get the Cavs out of Tennessee with a win.

Randolph abused Anderson Varejao and J.J. Hickson en route to 32 points and 14 rebounds. Rudy Gay and OJ Mayo were no walk in the park either as they backed up Randolph's big night with 21 points and 28 points respectively.

But it was Conley's unobstructed run to the rim with three seconds left in the overtime period that provided the final basket and the final margin of defeat.

James threw down 43 points and collected 13 rebounds to lead the Cavs. Mo Williams scored 20 and Shaquille O'Neal added 16 points but Williams and James also combined for half of the Cavaliers 20 turnovers with five apiece.

Memphis is improved. The win was their third straight and they've accumulated a young, talented, athletic group of players. But the Cavaliers lack of focus and inability to take care of the basketball had as much to do with their four game winning streak coming to an end as anything the Grizzlies threw at them.

Takeaways

- I don't know what exactly it is, but it seems that every ten days or so the Cavs need a slap to the head like they took in Memphis to rattle their cages and get them re-focused. They fell into some tired, bad habits again Tuesday night in the FedExForum. They were sloppy as hell with the basketball and all too often their offensive sets reverted back to 2006 and it became LeBron on five. Many nights that's still good enough. But when they let the Grizzlies back into the game after the half Memphis was re-energized and the Cavaliers were caught flat-footed.

- What is it about the NBA that allows for the worst officiating of any major sport? This isn't solely about Tuesday night. It was terrible on Tuesday night, don't get me wrong. But it was terrible for both clubs. It just seems that on any given night in every given game that NBA officials consistently get a majority of plays wrong. Every call seems to be a coin flip and more often than not the call that's made is a questionable one.

I realize that officiating a game with ten big, brawny gazelles running up and down in a confined space isn't easy. Truly I do. But if these guys aren't influencing outcomes on purpose for cash they're certainly doing just that accidentally or due to flat-out incompetence. The league needs to overhaul their officials and set up a system where competent referees make calls based less on the reputation of players and anticipation and more on what the actual play dictates.

Because the current state of NBA officiating is embarrassing.

- The loss to the Grizzlies carries a little extra significance when you consider the Cavs have to put it out of their minds, board a plane and hook up with the Houston Rockets in Houston on Wednesday night. The Toyota Center hasn't exactly been kind to the Cavaliers and, even without Yao Ming and Tracy McGrady, the Rockets always seem to give the Cavs problems in Texas.

At 15-6, and coming off a loss to Memphis, the Cavs do not want to drop a couple straight and get themselves lost in the wake of Atlanta, Orlando and Boston. Wednesday night becomes a pretty big game even if we're only in December.

- Daniel Gibson is back.

The Cavs shooting guard had another effective night against the Grizzlies in going 5-7 from the field, 3-3 from deep and scoring 13 points in 16 minutes. Why Gibson didn't get a bit more run against Memphis is a question for another day. But you can tell Gibson is healthy and shooting the ball well when he can ball-fake a defender off the floor and get to the basket. The diminutive guard did just that on a couple of occasions Tuesday for a couple of hoops.

They Got Next

As previously mentioned, it's off to Houston Wednesday night for an 830pm tip on FSN Ohio against the Rockets. After that the Cavs greet the Portland Trail Blazers back home at ‘The Q' on Friday night at 8pm. That one is also on FSN Ohio.