Sometimes, figuratively speaking, a good kick to the rear end will get one re-focused. Consider the Cavs kicked. The Charlotte Bobcats took advantage of an error-prone and disinterested Cavalier squad and escaped Quicken Loans Arena with their first ever win in Cleveland by a score of 91-88. After looking disinterested for most of this one, the Cavs scrambled late to shave a seven point Charlotte lead down to one before a late game brain lapse ultimately ended up doing them in. Brian McPeek rehashes the loss for our readers.

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Consider the Cavs kicked.

The Charlotte Bobcats took advantage of an error-prone and disinterested Cavalier squad and escaped Quicken Loans Arena with their first ever win in Cleveland by a score of 91-88. The Cavaliers had scrambled to get a seven point Charlotte down to one point with 12 seconds left but inexplicably failed to foul Bobcats guard (and terrible free throw shooter) Flip Murray and instead ended up fouling Stephen Jackson after more than 9 seconds had run off the clock.

Jackson hit both free throws and LeBron James' three-point attempt from the corner came up just short and the Cavaliers watched their 7 game win streak come to an end just that fast.

The late game brain lapse wasn't hard to see coming. The Cavaliers were a step slow mentally and physically all evening and committed turnovers at the most inopportune times. Credit the Bobcats with causing some of those turnovers, taking advantage of most of them and knocking down clutch shots for most of the night.

James again led the Cavaliers in scoring but, for the first time in a long time, he was almost a non-factor in the fourth quarter. James added seven rebounds and six assists. Mo Williams scored 27 points but also committed half of the Cavaliers 12 turnovers. His 1:1 assists to turnover ratio isn't what you're looking for out of your starting point guard. Shaquille O'Neal was the only other Cavalier in double figures with 10 points and the Cavaliers' bench was outscored 24-12.

Jackson led the Bobcats with 22 points but it was Gerald Wallace that really hurt the Cavaliers. Wallace chipped in 19 points and also hauled down 12 rebounds including every seemingly critical board. Flip Murray chipped in 10 points as well. His cold-blooded three pointer with a minute left was a knife in the chest for the Cavaliers.

How disinterested were the Cavs until pushed to the very edge? Consider that James didn't even attempt a free throw until the final 90 seconds and that he finished the night with more personal fouls than free throw attempts. Try and find a couple more games where that went down.

Takeaways

- A loss like this one is frustrating but it really doesn't bother me like

it would have a few weeks ago. Three weeks ago it would have represented a pattern of play as opposed to a blip on the radar, which is how one should look at it. The Cavaliers have played tremendous basketball over the last three weeks or so and they simply failed to show up Sunday night.

Don't take that as a swipe at the Bobcats. There was a time in the not too distant past when the Cavs would have gotten away with their lackluster effort of Sunday night. But the Bobcats are more talented and more capable of taking advantage of off-nights from quality teams than they were in recent years.

Stephen Jackson gives them toughness and talent and Gerald Wallace isn't afraid to get in there and fight either. Raymond Felton has always been tough on the Cavaliers and the team under Larry Brown is just more intense and dangerous.

The Cavaliers have lost nine games on the season and Charlotte has now gotten them twice while Washington and Memphis each have also beaten Cleveland. The fact is that six of the Cavaliers' nine losses have come at the hands of teams who are at or below .500 on the season. That's not a talent disparity, that's attention deficit disorder.

Everyone that tips it off with Mike Brown's club is going to give their best effort until they're dissuaded from doing so by the lopsided numbers on a scoreboard. Young and hungry teams can make their

month with a win over Cleveland.

You'd like to tune in or attend and see a balls-to-the-wall effort every night. But that's just not a pace that can be maintained over 82 games. A .750 winning percentage and wins over quality teams works just fine. Every now and then you've just got to grin and bear it with a night like Sunday night.

- One can't use the old "It was the second game of a back-to-back set" excuse for this one. Charlotte was also on their back end of a back-to-back situation and they handed Miami a loss in Miami on Saturday night before flying up to Cleveland and getting a win against the Cavaliers.

They Got Next

The Cavs get a few days on the practice court before hosting Washington Wednesday night in a 7pm FSN Ohio tip. After that one, one the Cavaliers now have no excuse to overlook, the team heads out west again for an eight day trip that includes games against Denver, Portland, Golden State, Utah and the L.A. Clippers.