Talk about a tough pill to swallow after staying up 'till 1:30 AM. The Cavaliers fell 97-96 to the Utah Jazz last night, losing on a last second three pointer from Sundiata Gaines, just called up from the D-League, and in for an injured Deron Williams. And this was after a furious, LeBron James led comeback, as the King scored 20 fourth quarter points to bring the Cavs back from a 18 point Jazz lead in the final stanza ... only to see the team undone by missed free throws and a prayer three pointer from Gaines in the final seconds. Sam Amico tells our readers about the heartbreaking loss.

The Cavaliers may say missed free throws weren't the only reason they dropped a heartbreaking 97-96 decision in Utah on Thursday, but free throws would be a good place to start.

Anthony Parker and Zydrunas Ilgauskas had a chance to put the game away and complete the Cavs' remarkable comeback -- but instead made the rim cringe with fear by missing three of six foul shots with less than a minute left.

And who cares if we're talking about the Jazz, a team that has been up and down all season and placed its fortunes in the hands of a rookie who had spent the majority of the year in the D-League?

You give an opponent enough chances, and at some point, you're gonna get stung.

That's what happened to the Cavs, who could only watch helplessly as Sundiata Gaines buried a 3-pointer to sink the good guys at the buzzer.

This after LeBron James single-handedly brought the Cavs back from 12-point deficit in the fourth quarter, using an array of threes and dunks and drives. Make no mistake, the King did everything he could.

But hey, give the man a little help, please.

It's true the Cavs are at the tail-end of a tiring West Coast swing, but this one did take place after a rare two days off. So fatigue shouldn't have been an issue. Especially not when you're catching your breath with the clock stopped at the free-throw line, as Parker and Ilgauskas were when they tossed up their major misses.

Now, this isn't to set the loss solely at the feet of AP and Big Z. Truth is, everyone outside of James (36 points, 9 rebounds) pretty much stunk up the joint.

Mo Williams fouled out with 10 points, four assists and three turnovers. Not exactly an All-Star performance from your starting point guard.

Delonte West (11 points) committed a foolish foul in the final 15 seconds, tripping Jazz forward Paul Millsap, stopping the clock and sending Millsap to the line. Incidentally, Millsap made both of his free throws.

Shaquille O'Neal took a whopping four shots, making two and finishing with five points. Granted, the man is getting up there in age, but come on. Shaq has Mehmet Okur and Carlos Boozer trying to check him, and the Cavs can't get him the ball? Makes no sense.

Then there's Ilgauskas, who simply was asleep at the wheel, despite the fact no even asked him to drive. His one point (and 0-for-4 shooting) just glares at you from the box score. It's the type of stat line that can ruin your day just by looking at it.

As for Parker, yes, he made six of his eight free-throw attempts. But he didn't make them when they mattered, and you have to wonder why he kept being fed the ball on all those inbounds plays at the end.

Then there's the matter of the season-high 23 turnovers. Bottom line: When you're that careless with the ball and miss 10 foul shots in a one-point game, chances are, you're toast.

Again, this isn't intended to trash a team that showed some guts and made some strong defensive stands when all else seemed lost. For the most part, the Cavs played like champions. They still have every right to believe that they're the best team in the league.

But championship teams dig in their heels and keep kids who are playing in just their fifth NBA game (as Gaines was) from beating them.

Championship teams take care of business and take care of the little things. The Cavs didn't do that on this night, and it cost them.

Other than LeBron, only one Cavalier truly played up to his potential. That would be none other than fast-rising forward Jawad Williams -- who not only made 4 of 6 shots for 10 points, but was the only Cav to have played more than 16 minutes and not commit a turnover.

Jazz forward Carlos Boozer, the man we still love to hate, led his team with 19 points and a game-high 13 boards. Okur scored 13, as did reserve guard Ronnie Price, who also hit a big three in the final minutes.

Gaines, who was signed to a 10-day contract last week after point guard Deron Williams injured his wrist, finished with nine points in nine minutes. (Williams, by the way, re-injured his wrist in the first half and never returned.)

The Cavs were lifeless early in the fourth quarter, before James scored 20 of 36 points in those final 12 minutes. LeBron's heroics enabled the Cavs to go on a 22-4 run that gave them a six-point lead with 32 seconds left.

But as it turns out, James' heroics weren't nearly as big as those provided by a guy like Gaines, a guy whom you had never heard of before last night. That's right; a guy like Gaines came up bigger than James.

And guess what? Missing key free throws can make weird stuff like that happen.

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