The best way to get over a one-point loss? Pick up a one-point victory. The Cavaliers bounced back from Thursday night's heartbreaker in Utah, this time surviving a last-second shot attempt to edge the Clippers at Staples Center, 102-101. Cleveland struggled for much of the night, falling behind by double digits at various points in the first three quarters, but for the second consecutive year put together a strong fourth quarter on the road against the junior-varsity representatives from Los Angeles. Jesse Lamovsky tells us about the win.

The best way to get over a one-point loss? Pick up a one-point victory. The Cavaliers bounced back from Thursday night's heartbreaker in Utah, this time surviving a last-second shot attempt to edge the Clippers at Staples Center, 102-101. Cleveland struggled for much of the night, falling behind by double digits at various points in the first three quarters, but for the second consecutive year put together a strong fourth quarter on the road against the junior-varsity representatives from Los Angeles.

So the Cavaliers finish their second West Coast swing of the season a more-or-less healthy 3-2. It could have been better; it was most certainly bizarre, but let's just take it and move on to what will be a decidedly more home-friendly schedule on the back half of this season. At 31-11 and in first place in the East despite playing the most road games of any team in the NBA, Cleveland is in pretty solid shape.

Slow Start: Cleveland began Saturday's affair looking hung over from the shocking end in Utah, while the Clip Show looked ready to make up for their 126-86 washout against the Lake Show the night before. The Cavaliers missed their first six shots from the floor while Eric Gordon, on his way to a brilliant night, ripped home a pair of three-pointers to help stake Los Angeles to a 10-0 lead.

They Just... Couldn't... Miss: Gordon never really cooled off the entire game, and neither did forward Rasual Butler. Gordon torched the Cavaliers for 28 points on 11-of-16 shooting and 4-of-5 from downtown, while Butler tied a career-high with 33 points, hitting 12-of-18 from the field. Much of Butler's damage, regrettably, was done against LeBron James. While Gordon and Butler straightened nets from outside, Craig Smith banged away inside for 16 points on 6-of-10, muscling his way to the hoop against the willowy Anderson Varejao. Los Angeles shot outrageously from the field, hitting on 59.7 percent and adding 10-of-19 three-pointers.

So Much For That Break: For the third time this season, Cleveland played a road game against a Western team missing its top scorer. Joining Dallas
sans
Dirk and Denver
sans
Carmello was the Clip Show
sans
Chris Kaman, he of the 20.9 PPG and 9.4 RPG. The Cavaliers lost to the Mavericks and Nuggets, and looked for most of Saturday like they were going to lose to Los Angeles as well. With Gordon, Butler and Smith dropping shots from all over the floor, the Clip Show wasn't exactly missing the scraggly-haired center from Central Michigan or Al Thornton, who also sat out.

Brother Red & Red-Hot Shooters: Cleveland trailed 25-18 late in the first period when Delonte West came off the bench and went to work. He knocked down a three-pointer, beat the horn at the end of the period with his trademark jab-step, and went on to score ten points in a run that sent the Cavaliers into a 34-33 lead midway through the second. It looked at that point like Cleveland was about to take control. They didn't. Gordon, Butler and Smith combined for 19 points as the

Clip Show regained control with a run to end the first half. At the break Los Angeles led 56-47 and had shot 65 percent. There was more where that came from.

Turnovers, Turnovers, Turnovers: They characterized Cleveland's offense during the road trip- 19 in Denver, 20 in Oakland, 21 in Salt Lake- and although the Cavaliers kept the number to a reasonable 12 in Los Angeles, a rash of miscues almost buried them late in the third period. Trailing 69-63 with just over five minutes remaining, Cleveland committed five turnovers in a three-and-a-half minute span to fuel a Clipper run that made it 78-65.

One-Man Lead Defender: After falling behind by 13 the Cavaliers began the push that would eventually win the game. But they had to go through Rasual Butler to get there- and he was a large hump to get over. Twice he bombed home circus three-pointers to give Los Angeles a six-point lead midway through the fourth quarter. After Cleveland had tied the game 95-95 with under five minutes left, Butler drilled another three-pointer to make it 98-95 in favor of the Clip Show.

Rough Ride: It's been a road trip to forget for Mo Williams. The sharpshooter from Alabama clicked on empty chambers throughout the West, shooting a shade under 35 percent. He didn't shoot particularly well on Saturday either- 7-of-17 from the floor- and was barbequed defensively by Eric Gordon, but he did score 18 points with six assists and hit a tough fall-away jumper to tie the game 93-93.with 5:28 left.

Finally, the Lead: Cleveland took it for good at 100-99 with 2:50 left when Delonte tipped in an errant Mo Williams triple attempt. From here on out, the Cavaliers buttoned it up. They didn't hit another field goal the rest of the game, as possessions settled into a dreary pattern of LeBron dribbling out the shot clock and hoisting it up.

Right in the Nick of Time: Cleveland held on to its narrow advantage because

the Clip Show finally started missing shots. Los Angeles was off on five of its last six from the field, including its last three- any one of which would have won the game for the home team.

Not Again: Leading 102-101 with 6.7 seconds left, the Cavaliers had to get one more stop to win the game- the stop they never got in Utah. This time they got it. Varejao forced Baron Davis into a tough shot, it missed badly, and Cleveland was out of there with the victory and the winning road trip. Losing on back-to-back buzzer-beaters would have been tough to swallow.

LeBron's Line: 32 points on 12-of-20 from the field, 3-of-6 from three-point range and 5-of-7 from the stripe with four assists, two rebounds, a blocked shot and five turnovers. I would classify this as a "quiet" 32 on LBJ's part- too many turnovers, too much ball-stopping on offense- although he did have an excellent fourth quarter, hitting his first four attempts of the period and scoring 13 points in all as the Cavaliers came back from seven down. LeBron held up his end of the scoring bargain on the trip, averaging 36.2 per night on 59.8 percent shooting.

Other Stars: Four Cavaliers scored in double figures Saturday. Delonte West was outstanding, scoring 14 off the bench with five rebounds and securing a game-high +14. Shaquille O'Neal was kept off the boards, taking just one rebound, but scored 11 points and hit a vital 5-of-6 from the foul line. Anderson Varejao had his problems with Craig Smith but forced two bad Clipper shots at the end and finished with seven points, nine rebounds, a steal and a blocked shot. Cleveland's bench again came through with 31 points, and the Cavaliers owned the painted area, outscoring Los Angeles 46-30 and out-rebounding them 43-35. After a shaky defensive night, they got the stops they needed to win the game- barely.

Fun Fact: Cleveland's biggest lead of the night was three points at 102-99.

Fun Fact II: Four of the five games on the road trip were decided by three points

or less.

Chance to Make Hay: Starting Tuesday night against Toronto, the Cavaliers play 11 of their next 13 games at home in Quicken Loans Arena. With the Lake Show starting an eight-game Eastern swing in Cleveland on Thursday, this is an opportunity for the Wine & Gold to perhaps get a cushion on the Forum Blue & Gold in the race for the league's best record. (I know it didn't help the Cavaliers last season. But it never hurts.)

Next: Tuesday night at 7:00, when the Cavaliers return home to the Q to take on the Toronto Raptors. Toronto is playing pretty good basketball, having won nine of twelve going into Sunday's tilt with the Mavericks.