Even if you don't care about the Cavaliers, you care about tonight. You care about our beloved city, and how much it will mean to Beat L.A. You remember how the Cavs had their way with Kobe Bryant and the Lakers on Christmas Day; how our so-called insignificant part of the world bent Hollywood over its knee and gave it what it deserved. You remember Lakers fans throwing those foam fingers on the floor, angry over the officiating ... angry over the loss ... angry over the fact a team from Cleveland kicked its butt. It's round two, tonight, Lakers at Cavs. Sam Amico previews tonight's epic tilt for our readers.

Even if you don't care about the Cavaliers, you care about tonight.

You care about our beloved city, and how much it will mean to Beat L.A.

You remember how the Cavs had their way with Kobe Bryant and the Lakers on Christmas Day; how our so-called insignificant part of the world bent Hollywood over its knee and gave it what it deserved.

You remember Lakers fans throwing those foam fingers on the floor, angry over the officiating ... angry over the loss ... angry over the fact a team from Cleveland kicked its butt.

You love how LeBron James got the best of Kobe Bryant, a homegrown superstar refusing to back down to the sometimes smug celebrity who plays for the team

that TV execs and league officials love to see win.

Actually, Kobe's not that bad of a guy. But you don't really care for him, anyway. After all, he's not OUR guy. And as far as we're concerned, he's not as good as our guy. Seriously. Imagine Kobe in Cleveland and LeBron elsewhere. Just wouldn't be the same, would it?

And that's what makes nights like tonight so meaningful. You want LeBron to PROVE he's the best in the game. You want him to show that being the ultimate teammate still means something in the game of basketball. LeBron may not have Kobe's "killer instinct," but he sure can out-rebound and out-pass the guy.

You want that to be worth something. Namely, another win over the defending champions.

The Cavs. The Lakers. LeBron. Kobe. TNT. Prime time.

Even if you don't care about basketball, this really means something. Even for a regular-season game in late January on a weeknight.

Oh, did we mention Phil Jackson? Doesn't the Lakers coach just get under your skin?

Here's a man who has won 10 titles. He's done it with the likes of Michael and Scottie, Kobe and Shaq. Year after year after year, he haunts Cleveland.

He's arrogant. He's brash. He's better than you.

At least, that's the message Jackson always seems to be conveying. And it's the exact opposite of Cleveland's coach. Mike Brown is humble. He's friendly. He's appreciates you.

The only thing Jackson seems to love more than basketball is himself. The only thing Brown seems to love more is his family. And maybe watching his team come together.

In other words, even if you moved to L.A., you might not like the Lakers. They are not from our world. The Cavs, however, represent everything with which we identify. They have no tradition. They have no real rivals. They lost in the conference finals despite owning the league's best record and home-court advantage.

And midway through this season, that still stings.

So no matter what the players say, or how the coaches or commentators downplay it, tonight's game matters. Tonight's game gives both teams a chance to feel they have the upper hand. Since both teams plan to reach the Finals, having that hand would be big.

But perhaps most of all, beating L.A., especially in today's big-market driven NBA, is always huge. It makes us feel like we matter -- even when no one really wants us to.

Now, is tonight for the title? Would it prove that LeBron is better than Kobe if the Cavaliers win? Does it mean you should give up on the season if they lose?

No, no and double no.

But is it a biggie, another test of how far this team has come?

Yeah, sure.

Mostly, though, we just love Cleveland. We just want to Beat L.A.

It just feels good to say, doesn't it? That's why even if you don't care about the Cavaliers, it's nights like tonight that make you think maybe you should.

Sam Amico covers the Cavaliers and NBA for NBA.com, and is a regular contributor to SportsTime Ohio and The Cleveland Fan.