There's nothing like writing a recap for a *completely* meaningless game in April . . . when you're on the road, and without three of your top six players. Oh, and one of those players being LeBron James.

Normally.

The Cleveland Cavaliers didn't end up coming out of Chicago with a win on Thursday night. But they definitely made it more interesting then you thought possible considering all the circumstances . . . and that's even *before* you found out that LeBron would be a healthy scratch.

I don't have any inside knowledge or anything, but there's a decent chance that Coach Mike Brown decided to rest LeBron in this game so that he could play in tonight's home game against the Indiana Pacers. I'm not sure that the team would ever cop to that . . . and I'm not sure that it would even enter their minds . . . but if that *is* the case, it's a pretty nice gesture to my sister and brother-in-law.

[They have tickets to tonight's game, and like everyone else traveling to The Q, they'd love to see LeBron . . . meaningless game or not. Of course, LeBron may not play tonight either, but he was definitely not going to play both games of the back-to-back.]

All right, let's talk about this game.

First, the frame: The Cavaliers, if you somehow don't know by now, have clinched the best record in the NBA . . . meaning that there's nothing left to play for, other than preparing for the playoffs. In addition to LeBron, the Cavs were without Shaquille O'Neal (recovering from thumb surgery), Delonte West (back spasms) and Daniel Gibson (mid-foot sprain, whatever that is). Jawad Williams started for LeBron.

The "A" storyline was clearly Mo Williams.

Whether it was out of necessity, design or desperation, Mo was in control of the offense. And whether it was out of skill, luck, or the simple joy of freedom from LeBron, Mo *became* the offense.

He was a superhero . . . nailing three-pointers with questionable consciousness.

In the fourth, Mo put on his LeBron James mask, and took over the game. The Cavaliers were living and dying with Mo's Goosenecks . . . and while that obviously isn't the most sound gameplan in the long run, it *could* have won this game for the Cavs if they would've stuck with it.

In the end though, the defense of the Bulls' Kirk Hinrich and poor execution by the Cavs left Anderson Varejao to take *two* long jumpers in what would be the Cavs' final possession.

Not that it really matters, but Andy was put in a tough position. He's 10% at fault for the first one. He received the ball from Mo after a pick, and really didn't have many options. He had time to put the ball on the floor . . . but you can't like those prospects either. He awkwardly

threw up an 18-footer.

After the miss, Jamario Moon tapped the rebound out and the Cavs had another shot.

Again, the ball ended up in Andy's hands. Time was running down, but there were 4.3 seconds left, and Zydrunas Ilgauskas was wide open, *and* calling for the ball, on the other side of the floor.

The passing lane was clear, but Andy, who was also open, took the 15-footer and missed it. He was 40% at fault for that one. The Z pass should've happened, but it's hard to pass up an open shot to win the game. And that situation can't be practiced much, because when LeBron is playing, the ball goes to him.

The Cavs lost 109-108, but they have Mo to thank for being in it.

He finished with a double-double, 35 points and 10 assists. He hit six 3-pointers . . . all of them in the second half, four of them in the final 5:30, and two of them in the final 2:00. He scored 12 of the Cavs' final 15 points. In eight minutes in the fourth quarter, Mo had 12 points (on 4-of-9 shooting; 4-of-6 from beyond the arc) and had four assists. LeBronesque.

As Mo was sinking ridiculous 3s, LeBron was supporting him by flashing Gooseys and hopping around on one leg (???) on the sideline. For a supposedly meaningless game, the Cavs sure were into it. And that's all you can ask.

After the game, Mo said: "I tried to be as Bron-like as possible."

The "B" plot was Sebastian Telfair, who was activated for the first time, and played nearly 17 minutes. And while no one is expecting much from Telfair this season . . . hell, I'd be surprised if Telfair even expected to *play* this season . . . he looked, well, pretty good.

He shined in the second quarter, when he scored all eight of his points (on a then-4-of-4 from the field) with an assist in six minutes. He finished with three assists and the eight points (on 4-of-7 shooting).

(It's highly unlikely that he'll even be active for a playoff series, but it definitely doesn't hurt to see him being productive. It'll be interesting to see where or *if* he fits into the Cavs' plans for next season.

A few other odds and ends:

* Antawn Jamison, who finished with 23 points, suffered some sort of foot injury in the fourth. In the replays, it looked like it could be a little serious, but Antawn was later seen smiling on the sideline. It's being called a "bruised foot," but as of early this morning there weren't any further details.

* Jamario Moon played his first significant minutes (28) in almost a month. He had 14 points (on 6-of-10 shooting; 2-of-4 from beyond the arc) with four rebounds two assists and a block. He started off slow on both ends of the court, but he was one of the impact players in the second half.

* Just two amusing things from the telecast: TNT play-by-play man Kevin Harlan accidentally referred to Bulls forward Taj Gibson as Mel Gibson in the fourth quarter. And Kevin McHale loves the Cavs a lot . . . and it sounded like he's envious of how much fun the Cavaliers have playing basketball. (I bet a lot of guys both in and out of the league share that sentiment.)

* For the Bulls, three players scored 20+ points: Derrick Rose (24), Hinrich (23) and Luol Deng (22). It was Deng's missed free throws that almost lost the game for the Bulls, and Hinrich's defense on Mo late in the game that probably won it for them.

* This game ends the Cavs' 30-game winning streak against teams with a losing record. That's

only happened three times in the history of the NBA. Over the past two years, the Cavs are 66-10 against sub-.500 teams.

If there *was* one meaningful thing about this game, it's that Chicago is a potential first round playoff match-up for the Cavs . . . if they're able to slip past the Toronto Raptors for the #8 seed. With the loss to the Cavs, the Bulls and the Raptors are tied in the standings.

And they still have a game left against each other.

Even without Chris Bosh, neither Toronto nor Chicago will be a problem for Cleveland in the playoffs. And clearly the Cavs don't have a preference on who they play. If they did (and wanted the Raptors), they would've played LeBron in this game and rested him against the Pacers in tonight's game.

Credit the Cavs: For these final few games being " high-level practice ," they sure are keeping them interesting. In a good way.