There are pressure points in a Playoff series, points in which the momentum can shift decisively one way or another. Friday night's East Semifinal Game Three in Boston was one of those: the underdog Celtics, a Game-Two rout under their belts and LeBron's tender right elbow in their back pocket, with a chance to seize control of a series that was suddenly very much up in the air.

A Championship team controls those pressure points. A Championship team seizes control when the season is in the balance. A Championship team does what the Cleveland Cavaliers did to the Celtics on Friday night. Dealing Boston its worst home playoff defeat in franchise history, Cleveland dominated right from the start in rolling the Celtics in their own backyard, 124-95. And it was no one other than the superstar with the bad elbow that dealt out the first- and final- blow.

LeBron's Line: 38 points on 14-of-22 from the field, 2-of-3 from downtown and 8-of-9 from the line with 8 rebounds, 7 assists, 2 blocked shots, a steal and 1… count it, 1… turnover. I recall being concerned about the elbow- more than concerned actually- and I'm sure I'll be concerned again at some point this spring, but damn… how can you fret at all over a performance like this?

Consider what LeBron did to the Celtics in the first quarter. In a devastating twelve minutes the prodigy hit 8-of-10 from the field, outscored Boston 21-17, grabbed four rebounds to Boston's five and drained 5-of-5 from the free throw line to Boston's 4-of-4. LeBron did in the first quarter what he didn't do in all of Game Two- he took, and made, the outside shot. Five of his first-period baskets came from outside the painted area, forcing Boston to respect the jumper and opening up the passing lanes for the rest of Cleveland's offensive weapons. At the end of twelve minutes the Cavaliers led 36-17- and the game was over.

Maybe the elbow is all right, and maybe it isn't. In terms of who the Man is, maybe's don't exist. Right down to his smothering defense on Paul Pierce (11 points, 4-of-15 from the field) LeBron was the Man in every way, shape and form. It's nights likes these, with LeBron being LeBron, the offense being liquid and the defense being stubborn and smart, that make all things seem possible.

About the Offense: 59.5 percent from the field, 25 assists to 12 turnovers and- get this- 31-of-34 from the foul line. All five starters in double figures, 41 points off the bench, and a team record for points in a Playoff game. If LeBron's elbow is willing, this team will have more breakout scoring games this spring- they're too talented offensively not to. But you might not again see a performance like this- on the road, in a hostile environment, in a game that was in many ways a must-win.

Cavalier Heroes (This Merits its Own Section)

Antawn Jamison: Tawn got going early with 9 first-quarter points, survived a 20-point, 8-of-11 performance from Kevin Garnett and finished with 20 and 12 in 29 minutes. With Tawn it's a matter of offsetting his opponent's offensive production- he'll need to do the same against 'Shard Lewis in the next round, if it comes to cases- and he did so and more against Garnett Friday, especially considering his 12-4 edge on the backboards.

Anthony Parker: The Israel Sports Legend drew the primary assignment on Rajon Rondo and got Cleveland's defensive night off to a solid start by forcing Rondo into several missed early jump shots. Rondo got his numbers, to a degree- 18 points, 8 assists- but he took the most shots on his team (good) hoisted a troika of three-pointers (also good) and didn't get a double-double (also, also good.) Rondo never controlled the game Friday, and much of that was due to Parker's early, sturdy defense. Parker took the fight to Rondo, hassling him in the backcourt and in the first quarter forcing him into an eight-second violation that for whatever

reason wasn't called.

Parker also took time to score 11 points on a perfect 4-of-4 from the floor, including a troika of made three-pointers, as opposed to Rondo's troika of misses from downtown. I will go the rest of this piece without writing the word "troika," I promise.

Mo Williams: Taken off Rajon Rondo for much of the night, Mo responded with gusto, aiding in an effort that left Ray Allen with seven exceedingly quiet points. He tried defensively, which is all we can ask of him. He also attacked the basket offensively scoring 12 points without hitting a three-pointer, and did so without committing a turnover.

Shaquille O'Neal: Shaq finally got those bunnies to go Friday night, knocking in 5-of-7 from the field and finishing with 12 points and 9 rebounds. He also hit both of his free-throw attempts and is now hitting a cool 70 percent (14-of-20) from the stripe in the postseason. Take away his 2-of-5 outing in Game One of the Chicago series and he's at 80 percent. There seemed to be less of the grind-it-in-to-Shaq offense of the first two games; most of his scoring came off second chances or passes on the move. The big man didn't bog down the offense- he flowed within it in an accomplished veteran performance.

Leon Powe: The ex-Celtic, activated for the first time this series, entered the game late in the fourth period, played five minutes in front of an appreciative Boston crowd and scored four points, including a predictable 2-of-2 from the foul line. Despite having no ability to shoot or score in the post, Leon Powe shoots free throws at a Moses Malone clip. I don't know how he can play the NBA game, but he does. Jeff Van Gundy expressed alarm at Powe's marching gait, exclaiming, "He's not running very well!" That's just how he runs, Coach.

Mike Brown: After laying an egg in almost every area in the Game Two loss the Coach responded with a defensive game plan that turned Rondo into a scorer- which he isn't- and an offensive game plan that, um, well, got a huge game out of LeBron James.

Not Many Troikas: Cleveland's James Doolittle offense from the Chicago series has gone landlocked. After bombing away gleefully from downtown against the Bulls, the Cavaliers have shot a total of 24 three-pointers in their two victories thus far over the C's. Cleveland went 5-of-12 from three-point territory on Friday night, all five makes by Anthony Parker and LeBron

James.

Total Domination: Cleveland led for all but the first 51 seconds of Game Three and led by double digits from the 5:44 mark of the first quarter on. Boston's longest streak of consecutive points was seven, and that run did nothing but cut the Celtics deficit from 122-87 to 122-92 in the dying seconds. Cleveland hit Boston with the opening blasts of LeBron James- and Boston rolled over. Did it in front of their own fans, too.

Nice Togs: Highly unusual for a Playoff game, the Cavaliers came out in their not-retro, Wine & Gold Lenny Wilkens-era uniforms- the nicest uniform they've got, pending a W&G rendition of the late '90s "paint-splatter" jobs.

Next: Game Four, Sunday, 3:30 PM in Boston. The tenor of this series has changed in a hurry. Cleveland has the Celtics on the run. A Championship team presses the issue, crowds its opponent, and goes home up 3-1 with the clincher waiting at the Q. With the Elbow at least temporarily not an issue, that opportunity is there.