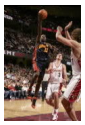

Team Has Dropped Four Of Six, Game With Spurs Looms Monday

The Cavaliers tendency to play to the level of their competition continued Saturday night, as the team fell at home to the Golden State Warriors by a score of 99-91. Coming into the game, the Warriors were 22-27 on the season, and had not won a road game yet in 2006.

Making this loss even harder to swallow was the fact that Golden State played without Troy Murphy and Baron Davis. Murphy is out with a sprained right ankle, and Davis was forced to leave the game in the first quarter. While the Cavs are still 18-7 on the season at home, they are now just 5-5 against teams with losing records.

The team played with no sense of urgency, and this one would have been even uglier had LeBron James not gotten off to a fantastic start. James had 31 points through three quarters. However, the team was reduced to “LeBron-watching” by the half, and when James ran out of steam in the fourth quarter, there was no one to bail him out. James once again played 44 minutes last night, and looked gassed down the stretch, attempting just three shots in the final frame. LeBron was also chasing around Jason Richardson defensively much of the night. James finished with 33 points, 5 rebounds, and 6 assists.

Speaking of Richardson, he had a very good game for a Warriors team that came to play. Richardson had 31 points, and hit tough clutch shot after tough clutch shot. Each time the Cavs appeared to be gaining momentum, Richardson would respond. The most crushing blow was a Richardson three ball, just seconds after a Damon Jones three cut the Golden State lead to 91-89 with three minutes left.

Richardson had help from his bench, which outscored the Cavs reserves 49-29. Derek Fisher filled in admirably for the injured Davis, scoring 18 points on 6-7 shooting. And Mike Dunleavy hit three clutch three pointers, and ended with 14 points. The Warriors shot the ball well all night, hitting 50% of their tries, and 53% in the fourth quarter.

As mentioned earlier, James had no help all night. Starters Drew Gooden,

Zydrunas Ilgauskas, and Sasha Pavlovic combined to shoot 6-28 from the floor. Pavlovic had an awful game, making just 1-8 from the field, and fouling out in 21 minutes. Gooden ended with just 1 point, and was 0-4 from the floor. And excluding James 5-6 performance, the rest of the team was just 5-22 from three point range.

The loss moved the Cavaliers to 29-21 on the season, and 11-11 without Larry Hughes, who could be out until the playoffs. The Cavs are all of the sudden just one game ahead of Indiana in the loss column for second place in the Central. And the world champion San Antonio Spurs visit the Q on Monday.