When The Whore of Akron (thank you Scott Raab) took his ego, his BFFs and his crazy mother to South Beach he left the Cleveland Cavaliers in a deep talent rut. That rut is deep enough that hustle and teamwork isn't going to be enough against the better teams in the NBA. And despite a career high 31 points from JJ Hickson, it wasn't enough to beat the Hawks on Tuesday night as Atlanta took a 100-88 decision from the Cavs at Quicken Loans Arena.

After watching the Cavaliers over the past three ballgames last Wednesday's emotional win over the Celtics sure seems like a long, long time ago.

That's just the way it's going to be this season for Cleveland. They're simply going to be out-talented on many nights. And when that happens in conjunction with the Cavaliers throwing the ball over the court they simply won't be able to make up the big deficits that result.

Right now this unselfishness that Byron Scott speaks endlessly about seems to mean only that any of the five players Scott puts on the floor are as likely to throw away the basketball or dribble it off their foot as anyone else.

Tuesday night the Hawks happily accepted each Cavalier gift and they capitalized on nearly all

of them when they shot 71% in the first quarter and ran off to a 13-point lead after 12 minutes of play.

The Cavs actually battled back and closed the gap to just a point after three quarters and grabbed a one point lead in the fourth, but the energy they expended in erasing the deficit sapped them down the stretch when the Hawks put the game away 26-15 advantage in the fourth quarter.

The loss drops Cleveland to 1-3 on the season while Atlanta remains perfect on the young year at 4-0 (including 3-0 on the road). Aside from Hickson's huge night that included those 31 points and 5 rebounds the Cavs also welcomed Mo Williams to the court for the first time this season and Mo knocked in 12 points off the bench. Anthony Parker was the only Cavalier in double figures with ten points. If you count the ten bad shots it seemed like Parker took early in the shot clock you might be able to squeeze a double-double out for AP.

The Hawks actually had five players in double figures, led by Marvin Williams with 22 points and backed up by Jamal Crawford and Al Horford with 16, and Mike Bibby and Joe Johnson with 15 points apiece.

Takeaways

- Atlanta has a really nice team and they're firing on all cylinders right now for new Head Coach Larry Drew. That's a team that's been together for a few years now and is comfortable together. The problem for the Hawks is that they're the same team that's been together for a few years now and they haven't added any bulk or leadership to a club that seems to be dying for just that if they hope to advance any deeper into the NBA playoffs.

- Andy Varejao's scoring average is going to miss those 6-10 free and easy point that The Whore of Akron generated for him nightly in years past. Varejao will have a lot of offense originate through him under Scott's system but he's not going to find too many easy looks and layups waiting for him as a result of guys flying at TWoA.

- It was nice to see Mo Williams back on the court Tuesday but it'd also be nice to see Scott

have his entire compliment of players together as the Cavs embark on a three game roadie starting Friday in Philadelphia. While Mo returned against the Hawks Antawn Jamison did not play. Apparently Jamo's cranky knees are giving him some issues as the 2010-2011 season starts. Part of me really wonders if those knees would feel better if he was playing for a contender.

- No one can tell me that Ryan Hollins and Jamario Moon don't share at least one parent.

- Atlanta's 40-point first quarter made me wonder if everything Mike Brown taught the Cavs defensively was packed up and shipped with Brown to wherever he's spending this season. I mean, none of those principles stuck? The Cavs did pick up the defensive intensity in the 2nd half and ended up holding the Hawks to 44% for the game. Still, four blocks and two steals from the team on Tuesday aren't going to send waves of terror through future opponents.

They Got Next

We're right back at you Friday night at 7pm from Philadelphia when the Cavs meet the 76ers and their prize rookie and Ohio State product Evan Turner. That game's on FSN Ohio and we'll recap it for you afterward here at www.theclevelandfan.com .