Designer: Tobie Hatfield - Nike, Inc., Portland, OR
Nike FREE 5.0, 2004 - Manufacturer: Nike, Inc.
Nylon, synthetic microfiber, rubber - Photo: Nike, Inc.

At least Sunday night's loss was entertaining, if not redonkulous. Cavs were 8-28 going in, 8-29 limping out. The injury list read like a "which players can't you live without" memo:

Anthony Parker

Boobie

Wild Thing (out for the season with a mangled Peroneus Longus)

Joey Graham

Leon Powe (6 -8 weeks)

WT's injury didn't even need a game for an excuse; his Peroneus Longus gave out during a practice session. Obscure injury, you say? Never heard of a Peroneus Longus? Don't feel bad. This bad boy took two MRIs to break radio silence.

In an amazing effort, what was left of the team pulled ahead of Nash and the Suns who orbit

around him by 8 points in the first quarter. And then watched as the lead collapsed, slowly, slowly, slowly. 26 – 26, tie score. End quarter 1.

Trying to make us feel better, Grant Hill fell down, excused himself and went to the locker room for the rest of the night. Fred could barely contain himself:

"Cavalier's youngs have a chance to really step up and shine here tonight ..."

Commercial break. Gangster Hamsters and giant toasters:

alt="" swfobject.embedSWF('http://www.youtube.com/v/miC1VZ9UVCQ','avreloaded0','368','280','9.0.28','/plugins/content/avreloaded/expressinstall.swf',{autoplay:'0',color1:'0xFFFFFF',color2:'0x000000',rel:'0',egm:'0',border:'0',loop:'0'},{wmode:'window',bgcolor:'#FFFFFF',menu:'true'},{id:'p_avreloaded0',styleclass:'allvideos'});

And we're back. Jeff Phelps stands in front of Joey Graham asking him what the team should do. Joey, bravely and without blinking or a hint of irony, urges the youngs to:

"... Stay optimistic ..."

Cut to Fred McLeod who says, I swear:

... [the] guys have definitely kept their dobbers up . . .

Rewind. Still hearing dobbers. Repeat. Dobbers. Bothers? Neither makes sense, but then nothing makes sense anymore. At one point in the second quarter, the average Cav age on the court was 22.

The third starts 51 – 52 Suns and somewhere just past half a quarter, AC knocks Fred's water over and it's 71 – 79 Suns.

Timeout Cavs. The incomparable point guard, Steve Nash, wraps himself in a "Right Guard" towel. Alonzo Gee hits a three "deep in the Verizon Center." Except we're not in DC; we're in Phoenix at the US Airways Center.

4th quarter starts 81 – 81. Inches its way to 86 – 86. 88 – 88. 90 – 90. Just over 5 minutes left in the game and its 92 – 95 Suns. Maybe the baby Cavs can do this. And then Christian Eyenga hits the floor, moaning, clutching his ankle, only no one notices. Nine guys race to the Suns basket, no luck; nine guys race to the Cavs basket, nearly step on Christian. No basket. Time out. Still 92 – 95 Suns.

Eventually Eyenga stands up, shakes it off and smiles. He has no choice. There are no more open spots on the injury list.

Energized, Manny Harris plunks in a couple of free throws, making it a one-point game. 94 – 95. Suns. And then we're holding fast at 94 watching the Suns rise. 96. 99. 101.

Right Guard Nash dribbles his little ambidextrous self around and between us. AC and I sigh but we have to pay homage. I'll let AC sum up the feeling of trying to defend against Nash:

"When you're even, you're behind."

To make sure AC and I understand he's not just a dribbler, Nash ends the game with a couple of swishy free throws. 100 – 108. Suns.

The youngs played hard. They'll get better.

The season may look bleak (ok, it is bleak) but there's an upside. No more pressure. No one expects us to win. And somewhere out there is a team with a huge, embarrassing problem in their future. Because eventually we'll win one. And if we spin it right, no one will remember the season of single digit wins; they'll be too busy documenting forever the team that lost to the baby Cavs.