Baron Davis' career has followed a fairly typical story arc for an NBA player of his skill level.

At his best, he's been a star. Not a league-defining superstar, but a prolific scorer and the best player on his team. It was the role he filled during his first career stop with the Hornets and during his most productive career stop with the Warriors.

His stint as a 20 point per game scorer in Don Nelson's 78-r.p.m. Warriors offense artificially inflated his value, and in 2008 earned him a 5-year, $65 million contract from the league's sucker-betters, the Los Angeles Clippers.

Davis was overpaid. His contract began to strain the Clippers, and they started looking for a team to take the lead weight off their hands.

Thursday, the Clippers found their dance partner in the Cavaliers. The Cavs are armed with the deep and open pocketbook of owner Dan Gilbert and were in the market for a first-round draft pick, which the Clips were willing to part with, if it meant offloading Davis' contract.

Exit Mo Williams and Jamario Moon, enter Davis and what appears to be a second lottery pick in the 2011 draft.

In Cleveland, we know the trade was made for the pick. Davis is collateral damage. He won't be here when the Cavs start making their upswing through the Eastern Conference in a few years -- or at least, that's the plan.

But in the interim, the Cavs are stuck with Davis. He's signed for two more years and due about $28 million over that span, so his contract is going to be difficult to buy out in any type of lump sum. The length and size of the contract also mean he'll be nearly impossible to trade until the 2012 offseason at the earliest, when his deal with reach its final year. And by then, a new collective bargaining agreement will likely be in effect, throwing another spoonful of uncertainty into the recipe.

The finances make the Davis situation a calculated risk. His attitude is a wild card that makes the deal combustible.

Davis has long been known as a mercurial player. He's quarreled with coaches and has never been afraid of expressing displeasure with a situation. His most famous friction was with Byron Scott, when Scott coached Davis in New Orleans. Davis once likened Scott to a dictator in an interview.

That would be the same Byron Scott who now coaches the Cavs. Reportedly, the two have smoothed things over from their Hornets days. But distance alters perception. With the two sharing a locker room again, proximity could cause old arguments to resurface.

Then you factor in the losing, and the fact that Davis is going from warm-weather L.A. -- his hometown -- to cold-weather Cleveland. If Davis was losing in L.A., he was at least comfortable.

In Cleveland, he'll be losing, in unfamiliar surroundings, enduring miserable weather and reunited with a coach he couldn't get along with five years ago.

It doesn't exactly sound like a recipe for a successful career stop.

Ultimately, it's up to Davis to be accepting of his new situation, and if he isn't, that's his problem. He's a 31-year-old veteran, and he should be expected to suck it up and play hard for his substantial paycheck, no matter where his team calls home or what place it occupies in the standings. But that brings accountability into the equation, which is a foreign concept to much of the NBA.

Davis might not play hard. He might not get along with Scott. He might produce a lousy attitude. And unfortunately, that does become the Cavs' problem, especially next year whenever the Cavs' two lottery picks venture onto the practice floor for the first time.

Davis is a veteran with all-star credentials. He's going to pull weight with any young players. He's going to be a role model of sorts. The question is, what will Davis be teaching? How to use a screen to get open, or how to sabotage your coach? How to set up the offense, or how to get your touches and chucks, and forget about everyone else?

A lot of Cavs fans want to see Duke point guard prospect Kyrie Irving in a Cavs uniform next season. If you want Irving, you do not want Davis to be his first mentor in the NBA unless you can somehow ensure that Davis the all-star will be doing the teaching, and not Davis the moody diva.

Somehow, Scott and his staff are going to have to ensure that the former Davis shows up, because unless Davis suffers a major injury that keeps him away from the team for a long period of time, they'll have to figure out how to assimilate Davis and all his idiosyncrasies into a team of wet-clay youngsters that will begin a critical formative process starting next season.

This might be a throwaway career stop for Davis, but after this season, it's not a throwaway period of time for the Cavs. Those two divergent viewpoints have to be reconciled. Something

tells me it's not going to be easy.

The Cavs should receive high marks for making the deal. Dan Gilbert once again opened his wallet and paid big money to try and benefit his team's on-court product. He assumed a burdensome contract to get a draft pick that, properly used, can help expedite the Cavs' rebuilding process. Chris Grant deserves a thumbs-up for waiting until the deadline to get the highest possible pick.

In a blog post published Thursday, Yahoo.com NBA columnist Kelly Dwyer said he thinks Mo should have been dealt last summer, in the immediate aftermath of LeBron's departure. If he had been dealt last summer, it likely would have been to a playoff team. So the Cavs could have received a pick at 20 or below by dealing last summer, or they could have gotten an unrestricted lottery-bound pick by waiting. Decisions....

Of course, this is a draft weak on star power, and you might be able to get the same type of player with the third pick that you could with the 13th. I'll still take my chances with a pair of high picks. If any cream rises to the top during the NCAA Tournament, I'd want a shot at it.

That's the good part. The more iffy part is life with Baron. You can hope for an injury -- which just seems wrong -- you can hope for a mature, professional Baron Davis to show up. Or you can hope all of this is avoided and the Cavs negotiate a buyout with Davis by the end of the month.

Davis is supposed to report to the Cavs by Saturday. If that doesn't happen, that last plot might thicken. Stay tuned.