Coming into the Cleveland Cavaliers game against Philadelphia on Sunday evening, Cleveland had won just 11 of their 58 games this season. But *two* of those wins came against the 76ers . . . back when the two teams' roles were reversed; when the Cavs were playing like they might be able to slip into the playoffs, and the 76ers were off to a 3-13 start.

Now, things are different.

Philadelphia is in line to grab the 7th seed in the Eastern Conference, 76ers coach Doug Collins is a contender for Coach of the Year (which would make him an odds-on favorite to be fired sometime next season), and the Cavaliers just finished a two-and-a-half month stretch where they couldn't beat anyone . . . other than themselves (and the New York Knicks, if they could get it to overtime).

But now things are becoming *different-er* for the Cavs.

Over the past six games . . . since breaking their 26-game losing streak . . . the Cavs have

actually played well for the most part. And in the midst of that, they traded the last main pillar from the LeBron James era, Mo Williams, for the L.A. Clippers' first-round lottery pick. (Jamario Moon and Baron Davis were also involved in the deal.)

The Cavs did lose to the 76ers on Sunday evening, 91-95, but it wasn't for lack of effort. Like their exciting win against the Knicks on Friday night, the Cavs played with energy and refused to give up, even when things began to fall apart . . . as they inevitably will at this stage.

Also like Friday, the Cavs weren't able to establish any consistency on the defensive end . . . and on the flip side, the Cavs benefitted from more encouraging play by J.J. Hickson and Ramon Sessions. But Sunday's game had more offensive mistakes - more time spent dazed and confused - and that's why they ultimately missed out on the win.

Remember though: This is everything you can ask for from a team like the Cavaliers right now. The Cavs just need to keep the games exciting, wins and losses aside. Yes, you still believe that you can win every night . . . but the more important thing is growing, and keeping it competitive. Not the score, necessarily, but the attitude; the intensity.

Any good fan can find plenty to root for that way. Any die-hard fan would struggle mightily to care about a team that gives in to the scoreboard; that gives up because of a wide gap in talent.

The Cavaliers have been doing that ever since they broke the streak, and Ramon and J.J. (save his abysmal game against Houston last Wednesday) have been the catalysts offensively. On Sunday, they teamed up numerous times . . . and both finished with double-doubles.

J.J. finished with 22 points (on 9-of-15 shooting) with 16 rebounds (nine offensive) and a block. Ramon had 20 points (on 6-of-13 shooting) with 10 assists and six rebounds. He did have five turnovers as well.

Samardo Samuels was good off the bench with 12 points (on 5-of-8 shooting) with six rebounds.

Antawn Jamison also added 16 points (on 7-of-14 shooting) . . . but he left the game with a fractured left pinky finger. It wasn't immediately known how much time (if any) he's expected to miss.

The Cavs started and finished well, dominating the first eight minutes and the last eight minutes. Unfortunately, that wasn't enough this time . . . but they were within two points with 30 seconds left.

None of the new guys played.

Baron Davis did not dress for the game, but was with the team on the sideline wearing some fascinating, circular professor glasses. He looked to be enjoying himself (although it *is* always hard to tell for sure with professor glasses in play).

As a quick aside, I'd like to say that despite the little jab I made about Baron being a throw-in in the deal . . . I actually feel like his approach, attitude and mere presence are important.

Cleveland made the deal for the pick . . . and Cleveland will be OK in the event of a Baron implosion, but this team needs help, guidance, experience and maturity and Baron has the potential to deliver all of those. He just has to accept his position, buy-in and start fresh.

It's extremely early, but at least for now, he seems to be doing just that.

He has chosen to wear the number 85 to remind himself of his roots. He says, "It's a special number. That's the street my grandmother lives on. I can get back to my roots . . . even if I have to dribble in the snow to get to the gym."

During Friday's game, which he watched on TV, Baron Tweeted that he loved the team's

energy. He also said he thought J.J. is "ballin, super underrated . . . [I] look forward to workin with him and see him become a BEAST!"

Then on last night's telecast, he said:

"It was meant for me to be here. I got traded here for a reason. I think the organization wants me here, I want to be here. I want to play as hard as I possibly can; bring wins here. There's great fans, great fan support. Great energy in the building. [...] I just want to be a part of this team, and help this team be as successful as it possibly can.

"Life is a challenge, so all you can do is continue to live and work hard. And I think that the promising thing is you get to mold young minds. You get to be with the head coaches, be with the coaching staff, and be the translator to translate a lot of the things that these young guys might need to speak their language. So for me, I'm still a young vet; I have a lot to prove and I want to do it here for these fans."

Here's to hoping Baron becomes a leader, and translates the right things to the young, impressionable players on the team.

It's unclear when Baron will make his Cavalier debut; he's currently nursing a sore left knee . . . but says he hopes it "won't be long" until he gets back on the court.

Speaking of J.J. being a beast, this is my favorite stat from Sunday night: J.J. had a plus/minus of +14, which means that the 76ers outscored the Cavs by 18 points when he was on the bench, but (obviously) had a 14-point edge when J.J. was on the court.