Uh, Cavalier fans: Baron Davis is for real. At least he was for one game Friday night.

For the third time this season, the Cavs played pattycake with the New York Knicks, overcoming a 12-point Madison Square Garden deficit in the final seven minutes to win, 119-115. Head coach Byron Scott's team took Carmelo Anthony's "We hold a grudge" comment earlier this week and beat him over the head with it.

It was a game that had the Cavs high-fiving and chest-bumping and the normally calm Scott going ape-shit (in a good way) on the sidelines.

Davis, the ex-Clipper, came into the game with 4:06 remaining in the first quarter and the Cavs trailing 26-17. He ended up playing 26 minutes, scoring 18 points, dropping five pretty fantastic dimes, and swishing a three-pointer with 10.2 seconds left to give the Cavs a 116-112 lead. In the process, he absolutely dazzled the Knicks' porous defense with deceptive hesitation dribbles and behind-the-back passes. In late fourth-quarter huddles, it was Davis doing the talking.

For a city that is still smarting from the willing defection of an all-star, Davis showed that, at age 32, he might be a short-term replacement for the former go-to guy.

After being down 104-92, the Cavs went on a 14-2 run, tying the game when guard Ramon Sessions -- who shared the backcourt with Davis for much of the game -- used a crossover dribble to score an easy lay-in and tie the game 106-106.

The game was tied again at 108 and 110, but the Cavs went up for good, 113-112, when Anthony Parker drained a three-point jumper from the left wing with 45.6 seconds remaining. Thirty seconds later, Davis's trey made it 116-112. Burly Samardo Samuels put the lid on New York's intended comeback by taking a Carmelo Anthony knee in the chest with 1.8 seconds left.

The high-scoring game was a study in contrast. While host New York -- with Jessica Alba looking succulent in the first row -- used a two-man, one-on-one attack, the Cavaliers distributed the ball well enough to place seven players in double figures.

Knick forward Amar'e Stoudemire turned the Cavs' defense inside-out and upside down for 41 points and 9 rebounds. Carmelo, the all-star forward who fulfilled a lifelong dream by getting himself traded to New York two weeks ago, chipped in 29 points but made a couple blatant floor mistakes down the stretch. The Knicks, with playmaking guard Chauncy Billups sitting injured on the bench, only had 12 assists, compared to 25 for the Cavs.

Here's how the Cavs racked up 119 points: J.J. Hickson 23; newcomers Davis and Luke Harangody 18 each; Samuels -- a beast under the basket -- 15 points; Parker and rookie Christian Eyenga 13 each; and Sessions 11, even though he missed three easy lay-ups.

The Cavs got 53 points off the bench compared to just 16 for the Knicks, whose fans and media are obviously premature in their dreams of an NBA title.

Questions that remain after the Cavaliers' 12th victory of the season:

(1) Can Baron the Beard, the moody all-star, maintain the effort and optimism that he showed Friday night, especially if the Cavs continue to win just 18% of their games? Everything's been roses and lollipops since his move from his hometown of L.A., but he is a mercurial personality. If he can keep a positive outlook, the Cavs might have found the true point guard and leader

that they've been looking for -- at least for another few months, or maybe another year or so.

(2) What's with TV commentator Austin Carr? He actually had one quotable observation (exceeding his quota by one): "The young guys are starting to understand that a knight in shining armor isn't going to come and help. They have to get it done themselves."

(3) Who's that goofy guy in the commercial with the glasses and the slick-backed hair who thinks he's Anderson Varejao? What a sorry-looking dude.

(4) How good can some of the Cavalier youngsters get? How consistent can they be? Judging by how far the team has come just since the All-Star break, does general manager Chris Grant have more than two or three players on the current roster who can contribute to a playoff-caliber team? Or not? Samuels, Eyenga, Harangody and Gee all show NBA-caliber talent, at least on occasion. Not to mention J.J. Mouthguard, who's got to be the biggest tease on the team, showing up about every other game -- but when he shows up, he shows up big.

(5) After watching the contest from start to finish, if I want to buy a vehicle, do I get a Kia that Blake Griffin can jump over? Stop at Central Cadillac? Take advantage of GM Truck Month and buy a Sierra? Get one of those "deals that are so good" at North Olmsted Nissan? Visit SuperGanley.com for a Volkswagen? Take advantage of one of the Chevy Network Dealers? Or should I deal with this or deal with that -- do-da-dippidy? I'm so confused.

(6) Is yours truly a lucky charm? As the newest Cavs recap-writer, I helped the Cavs break their long losing streak last month, and now I've witnessed the wine-and-gold premiere of Baron Davis, who helped beat the New York fans (Jessica included) into submission. I could really get to like this gig.

Next up: the New Orleans Hornets visit the Q at 6:30 p.m. Sunday.