1) NBA Commissioner David Stern: "With the fourth pick in the 2011 NBA Draft, the Cleveland Cavaliers choose Tristan Thompson of Texas."

2) The Associated Press: "On Thursday, the Cleveland Cavaliers…clearing out a logjam at power forward, traded the enigmatic J.J. Hickson to the Sacramento Kings for forward Omri Casspi and a future first-round pick."

Having sped torpedoes-be-damned through the NBA Draft and having used up almost every second before the trading/labor impasse deadline, the Cavaliers today find themselves no better off than they were at the end of the disastrous 2010-2011 NBA season.

For a team that has nowhere to go but up, that's a huge indictment of general manager Chris Grant, who has placed virtually his entire reputation in the hands of a 20-year-old who never played more than 18 months for any one team. It is a premature indictment, because it's still a long way to the beginning of the next NBA season (if there is one), but nonetheless Grant does not appear to have done the Cavs a whole lot of good.

His choice of Kyrie Irving as No. 1 overall was solid. But, face it, your six-year-old son could've made that pick. Less than a half-hour after surprising Irving, Grant shimmied out to the edge of a limb when he wrote Thompson's name on the draft card. And now, after trading away his starting power forward (J.J. Hickson) two weeks ago, Grant's reputation could be swaying in the breeze.

That is not to say that Thompson couldn't become the next Josh Smith (weak draft class, lower expectations) -- but as my old Magic 8-Ball says, "It is doubtful."

Apologists for the selection of Thompson (approximately six picks higher than even the most optimistic Texas Longhorn fan expected) are few and far between. For starters, he averaged 13.1 points, 7.8 rebounds and 2.4 blocks in more than 30 minutes per game in the powerful Big 12, where he was Freshman of the Year. But the Big 12 ain't the NBA. Hell, the Big 12 may not even be comparable to some of the better European leagues.

Here are some other statements from rose-colored-glasses-wearing draft observers:

"With his motor and desire to improve … [Thompson] can score, rebound and defend." (Sam Amick, *Sports Illustrated*)

"Thompson and [Derrick] Williams … both appear to be very solid prospects." (John Hollinger, ESPN)

"With that kind of athleticism, he provides a good running partner for Irving." (Matt Moore, CBS)

"He could be a solid sixth man who can come off the bench and provide his team with a spark on both sides of the ball." (Michael Pinto, bleacherreport.com)

"We hit a home run." (Cavs head coach Byron Scott)

"Irving and Thompson are a unique combination who can grow together. We actually had him [Thompson] ranked much higher than fourth." (Grant)

Blah, blah, blah.

The Truth

The truth of the matter is that the kid is undersized to play power forward in the NBA. He is a terrible foul-shooter, which will negate his presence on the floor during the final minutes of close games. He did not fill a need on draft night, as the Cavs already had Hickson and Samardo Samuels while they desperately needed help at shooting guard and small forward and maybe center, given that Andy Varejao is a power forward by trade. Thompson has shown to be impotent offensively when more than four feet from the hoop -- which, when paired with the offensively-challenged Varejao, makes one wonder where the Cavs' front-court points will come from.

Even in a weak draft, and even though his interviews and his one-on-none drills went exceptionally well, Tristan Thompson does not appear to be the kind of player you peg with the fourth choice overall. Maybe 8, 9, 10 -- but not 4.

Being dyed-in-the-wool Cavalier fans, we (fingers crossed) wish him the best of luck, even though most of us roundly preferred Jonas Valanciunas. In the coming years, it will be interesting to compare Thompson's development with that of Valanciunas, Jan Vesely and Bismack Biyombo, all of whom were also available to the Cavaliers at No. 4. Valanciunas, a 7-foot center, would have filled two of the Cav's needs, as he would have allowed Varejao to move back to power forward, his natural position. One pick (Valanciunas) and, voilá, the team fills two needs. Not to be.

2010 vs. 2011

To date, guys who got/will get the majority of playing time:

Point guard - (last year) Baron Davis, Ramon Sessions; (this year) Davis, Irving, Sessions

Shooting guard - (last year) Anthony Parker, Booby Gibson; (this year) Parker, Gibson

Power forward - (last year) Hickson, Samardo Samuels; (this year) Thompson, Samuels

Small forward - (last year) Antawn Jamison, Christian Eyenga; (this year) Casspi, Jamison

Center - (last year) Varejao, Ryan Hollins; (this year) Varejao, Hollins, Semih Erden

I don’t know about you, but I don’t see a whole lot of difference between 2010 talent and 2011 talent. Certainly, if Varejao and Jamison come back from last year’s injuries, the overall record will probably be better and we won’t have to suffer through a 26-game losing streak. But it won’t be because of Grant’s No. 4 draft choice, his No. 32 draft choice (Justin Harper, traded to Orlando) or his No. 54 draft choice (Milan Macvan, who will probably stay in Israel).

But let’s not jump to conclusions. Chances are, the general manager is not yet done shaking up the 2011-12 roster. So let’s give him a break. Better yet, give him a nice little wave. See him? He and his reputation are out on the end of yonder limb, swaying in the breeze. Hey, Chris ... how’s tricks?