I can remember reading article after article from 2009 bashing then GM, Danny Ferry, for signing Anderson Varejao for six years and 50 million dollars. One article even went as far calling the Andy deal “The Corey Maggette signing of the summer of 2009,” which was not a compliment. Many people didn’t think that Andy and (at the time) his very limited offensive game was worth this kind of money and I have heard this same argument thrown around today as well.

Those people that continue to regurgitate the words that were written from 2009 need to take a much closer look at this situation today before they speak. Anderson Varejao’s contract is not bad. In fact I will go so far as to say it is actually pretty damn good. First of all it is not the six year 50 million dollar deal that was thrown around back in 2009. Andy’s contract was really a six year deal worth 42.5 million that could escalate to 50 million depending incentives and the final year is partially non-guaranteed. For simplicity sake though let’s just use the follow table provided by Spotrac.com. Here are Anderson Varejao’s contact figures per year.

2009 – 6.3 million

2010 – 7.0 million

2011 – 7.7 million

2012 – 8.4 million

2013 – 9.1 million

2014 – 9.8 million

Also for reference let's just provide some of Andy's statistics over the past few years.

'08-'09 – 8.6 ppg, 7.1 rpg, 0.8 blk, 0.9 stl, .616 FT %, .536 FG%, 28.5 min

'09-'10 – 8.6 ppg, 7.6 rpg, 0.9 blk, 0.9 stl, .663 FT %, .572 FG%, 28.5 min

'10-'11 – 9.1 ppg, 9.7 rpg, 1.2 blk, 0.9 stl, .667 FT %, .528 FG % 32.1 min * only 31 Games played

For 7.7 million dollars the Cavs are getting almost a double-double per night plus a block, a steal, as well as decent FT shooting and plus 50% FG shooting. Not to mention all of the intangibles Andy brings to the court on the defensive side of the ball that have been well chronicled over his career with Cavaliers.

Now the fun part. Let's compare that to the following big men with similar stat lines or contracts.

1) **Tyson Chandler** C10.1 ppg, 9.4 rpg, 1.1 blks. Tyson is a better shooter and can defensively disrupt interior players in a different way than Andy but after signing a 4 year, 58 million dollar deal with the Knicks is he worth 5+ million more than Andy?!

2) **Nene Hilario** C14.5 ppg, 7.6 rpg, 1.0 blks. Sure Nene is better offensively. He has a better FG%, better FT%, really is a better athlete than Andy, but also has an injury past after resigning with the Nuggets for 67 million over 5 years is paid almost 6 million dollars more on average than Andy will be this season. Nene is also a below average rebounder for that type of money

and size.

3) **Andris Biedrins** C5.0 ppg, 7.3 rpg, 0.9 blks. Biedrins is such a horrific FT shooter since 2008 that his contract is comical at 9 million dollars per season.

4) **Emeka Okafor** C10.3 ppg, 9.5 rpg, 1.8 blks. Okafor has declined steadily over the past three seasons. While he blocks more shots than Andy he is a liability at the FT line and makes a whopping 12.6 million dollars. It gets worse. This salary jumps to 13.5 next year and 14.5 million in 2013!

5) **Chris Kaman** C12.4 ppg, 7.0 rpg, 1.5 blks. Kaman is a much better FT shooter than Andy and more offensively capable however his FG% is a career .487 and his rebound is sub-par for a 7-footer in my opinion. Also Kaman is on the books for 12.2 million this year and I am sure he will command 10+ million as an UFA in the summer of 2012.

6) **Mehmet Okur** CI'll use his '09-'10 line as he only played in 13 games last season. 13.5 ppg, 7.0 rpg, 1.1 blks. Mehmet is a different player than Andy. He has some range as a career 37.7% 3-Pt shooter, but doesn't rebound as well and shoots only 46% from the floor. His FT shooting is very good for a big man but is he really worth over 3 million more than Andy in 2011-2012?

7) **Brendan Haywood** CTo make this somewhat fair ill use his career line. 7.4 ppg, 6.3 rpg, 1.5 blks. Haywood is getting paid 7.6 million this year and his contract escalates at a similar rate to Andy. If you look at his career numbers he really is pretty similar to Varejao with the exception that he blocks more shots. Ill argue that Andy is a much better team guy and does more intangible things on both ends of the court compared to Haywood. He is also three years older than Andy with that same contract.

What is the purpose of comparing all of these stats and contracts? To show everyone that Anderson Varejao is a bargain. Especially for the next two seasons. Last season when Andy went down the Cavs had no inside defensive presence at all. They went on to lose the next seventeen games after Varejao made his last appearance in wine and gold for the season. Now I'm not saying the Cavs would have finished in the playoff hunt if Andy played a full year, but I am confident we would have won a few of those games during that record losing streak.

Andy is a very valuable piece to this rebuilding process. If the Cavs hold on to Varejao and he

continues to give this team a double-double per night plus interior defense and hustle that will only help the on court product and development of Tristan Thompson. If the Cavs move Andy for draft picks and/or players we should be able to get a decent haul in return to continue reshaping this team.

By today's NBA standards Varejao's contract is a good one and far from the Corey Maggette comparison from 2009. That's right the Wild Thing is indeed worth the money.