The Cleveland Cavaliers (8-13) appear to be in the bad habit of falling behind and working extra hard in the 4th quarter to be within striking position for the win. The problem with that is that this Cavaliers team is not the Kardiac Kids.

The Cavs had another great 4th quarter and scored 41 points compared to the Magic's 31. The "Hack-a-Howard" method was employed by coach Byron Scott and it worked fairly well, but the deficit was too large.

Dwight Howard took all of his 16 free throws during this stretch and made 9 of them.

On the year, Howard is hitting on 47.9% and he made 56.3% last night.

Although he shot better than his average, the difference is negligible.

The "Hack-a-Howard" method was a good idea in principle and I would like to see Byron Scott call for it again whenever the Cavs play whichever team he gets traded to.

The reeling Orlando Magic (14-9) seem to have a way of always showing up against the Cavs. After much talk about how horrible Hedo Turkoglu was for the Toronto Raptors, Phoenix Suns

and the Magic on his second sting with the team, he was a huge difference and gave the Cavs nasty flashbacks to the 2009 Eastern Conference Finals.
Turkoglu scored 18 points and did an admirable job of controling the offense and getting the ball to the right guy at the right time. He has a unique skillset and it is odd to me that he is not considered a better player than his reputation allows him.

In true Orlando Magic fashion, they took a lot of three pointers. Out of 26 attempts, the Magic only made 9 of them but they came at the most inopportune times.

For example, with the Cavs only trailing by 7 points early in the 2nd quarter, the Magic made 3 straight three-pointers in the span of less than 3 minutes.

The 7 point lead for the Magic ballooned into a 14 point one in what felt like a blink of an eye.

Dwight Howard was fantastic and flirted with a triple double (19 points, 16 rebounds and 8 blocks). Anderson Varejao, who typically struggles rebounding against the Magic managed to pull down 15 rebounds. I do not know what has gotten into Varejao this year, but he has transformed himself from a good rebounder to an elite one.

This is good regardless of whether he is traded or kept by the Cavaliers.

Either his trade value is increased or the Cavs have an elite rebounder under a reasonable contract.

Kyrie Irving had his first subpar shooting performance since he shot 1-7 against the New York Knicks on January 25th. Irving did not seem intimidated by Dwight Howard's interior presence and he repeatedly took it to him. The result was 18 points on 7-21 shooting, but it also resulted in Irving getting his shot blocked 4 times.

On the one hand it is encouraging that he did not let Dwight Howard affect his mentality and approach, but on the other hand it would have been nice to see Irving take advantage of Howard's help defense and try to get the Cavaliers big men some open shots under the basket.

Alonzo Gee is outplaying Omri Casspi. This is not something that I never expected to say at any point leading up to the season. Gee is not only making an argument that he should be considered for the starting small forward spot, but that he should be a long-term piece for the Cavaliers.

The fact that he was the highest scoring player between both teams is impressive.

What is even more remarkable is that he scored 13 points in the 4th quarter and was a key figure in nearly making an improbable comeback against the Magic.

Gee played all 12 minutes in the 4th quarter and made all 3 of his three point attempts during that stretch.

Worth noting is that Glen “Big Baby” Davis was suspended for 2 games prior to the matchup against Cleveland. Little is known about what happened to make Van Gundy suspend the power forward, but it is reasonable to believe that the Dwight Howard trade drama might be getting to the team from top to bottom. Magic coach Stan Van Gundy gave minutes to only 4 Magic bench players instead of extending the rotation.

Earl Clark and Von Wafer made the most of the extended minutes and combined for 19 of the 21 Magic bench points.

I hate to sound like a broken record, but this year’s success should not be quantified by wins and losses. The game against the Magic was neither good nor bad in a big picture sense. A concerning habit of the team is how they are in the habit of falling behind and working extra hard to win the game down the stretch.

On the other hand, it is encouraging that the Cavs are even in a position to win a lot of these games.

The Cavs team from last year would have thrown in the towel long before the 4th quarter began.

The Good: Alonzo Gee continues his strong play and is making a case that he indeed belongs in the NBA. He was efficient last night and led all scorers in the game despite the

fact that he came off the bench

The Bad: Antawn Jamison had another one of his patented “Phone It In” performances. The 16 points and 12 rebounds is nice, but a power forward taking 6 three pointers and only making 1 of them is inexcusable.

Of course his shot selection probably had something to do with Dwight Howard, but the three pointer was not dropping.

The Ugly: I’ve been watching the NBA for many years, and I have never seen an alley-oop attempt that resulted in a jumpball. That is until last night.