Sandwiched between the NCAA Title Game, MLB Opening Day, and The Masters, the Cleveland Cavaliers played the Milwaukee Bucks tonight—successfully fulfilling an obligation laid out for both squads during the drafting of the 2011-2012 NBA schedule.

The last time we were treated to this marquee Central Division matchup—once upon a five days ago—the Bucks easily sent the Cavs to their sixth straight loss. It was a different story tonight, however, as the Bucks easily sent the Cavs to their ninth straight loss. The final score of this basketball competition was 107 to 98 for the home team.

After losing 26 games in a row last season, it's almost insulting to say that this current Cavalier team has hit a low point right now. But if consecutive losses alone don't sell you on this suck parade, consider that the team's only watchable player—Kyrie Irving—was out of action again after re-aggravating a shoulder sprain that he never should have been asked to play through in the first place. I mean, I guess if Kyrie winds up with chronic shoulder problems and never reaches his potential, we will at least be able to say that he suited up in a completely meaningless game against the Spurs in the final weeks of his rookie season. But still, might not have been a genius move throwing him out there.

So anyway, here was Cleveland—less than a week after losing by 37 to the Bucks—heading for a rematch (in Milwaukee this time) without their best weapon in tow. A 50-point loss seemed completely plausible. But that's why they play the games. …Actually, they play these particular games to generate the revenue off of those empty season-ticket-holder seats. But either way,

the Cavs did fight back after falling behind in eerily familiar fashion 29-14 in the first quarter.

As with last week's shellacking, the Bucks' floor-stretching Turk, Ersan Ilyasova, helped lead the charge out of the gate, scoring 8 of his 18 points in the first period. But the lead never actually wound up stretching much beyond that point. In fact, at a glacier's rate, Cleveland chipped away at the Bucks' advantage, drawing to within 11 after three quarters, paced by the unlikely shooting of the Clankmaster General, Anthony Parker.

In probably his best offensive night ever as a Cavalier, Parker somehow got into a jump shooting tete-a-tete with the Bucks' lethal marksman Monta Ellis. In 32 minutes, Parker was kinda ridiculous: 11-of-14 from the field, 4-of-7 from 3-point range, 27 points, 7 boards, 4 assists, and 3 steals. His efforts helped pull the Cavs within striking distance in the fourth quarter, getting as close as 6 points on three different occasions. Unfortunately, Ellis (30 pts, 5 rbs, 8 asts) always had the answer. And I mean that literally. The dude scored the last SIXTEEN points of the night for Milwaukee, draining eight straight jumpers in the last five minutes of the ballgame. And that essentially *was* the ballgame.

All told, it's somewhat miraculous that Cleveland only lost this one by 9, considering the Bucks out-shot them by an eye-popping 57% to 41% from the field on the night. Once again, that bread trail leads straight to the Cavaliers' astonishingly pathetic second unit—now featuring Larry, Curly, Moe, and Samardo (don't forget to check out the new *The Three Stooges* at your local Cineplex this week— the worst relaunch of a franchise since the '99 Browns). Tonight, they shot a combined 25% (7-for-28) and 1-for-8 from the outside. So while the starting lineup of Parker, Antawn Jamison (17 pts, 7 rbs), Tristan Thompson (12 pts, 9 rbs), Alonzo Gee (12 pts, 8 rbs) and your new starting point guard Donald Sloan (12 pts, 8 asts) all held their own, the "depth" provided by Luke Walton, Samardo Samuels, Lester Hudson, and the mighty Omri Casspi looked more like an abyss.

Before the game, Byron Scott suggested he might sit Kyrie Irving for the remainder of the season. Sounds like a logical move in the Cavs' renewed quest for one of those Kentucky players. But then again, we've got the Raptors coming up on Friday. The effing Raptors, Man! Sore shoulder or not, Kyrie better get his ass out there and solve that Toronto riddle once and for all. Otherwise, we may never be able to truly enjoy his future accomplishments.

The Omri Casspi Suck-O-Meter

17 minutes, 3-for-9, 1-for-3 from outside, 7 points, 3 rebounds, one airball from point blank range

Meh……. Ugh ……. Why????? …… My Eyes!!!!!! ….. Wish We Still Had Larry Hughes