What a weekend for the Cavaliers, who pulled off exciting last second road wins in Utah and Golden State to go 3-1 on a very tough west coast road trip without Zydrunas Ilgauskas and Delonte West. In the Weekend Wrap, Peeks says that this Cavaliers team reminds him of the 1995 Indians with the way they are willing out wins. Peeks also hits on looming roster battles for the Indians in spring training, and Randy Lerner's embarrassing handling of the coach/GM search.

We've Seen This Before

I don't know about you guys, but this Cavaliers season strikes me as similar to that magical 1995 Cleveland Indians season.

You remember that one, right? The season where no lead was safe against the Tribe and the season when they won seemingly every night, often in the most dramatic of fashions? That was a year where they played at nearly a .700 clip and won 100 games despite the regular season being shortened to just 144 games because the strike year of 1994 pushed back the start of the '95 campaign.

That Indians season was also famous for the camaraderie of the guys on the roster, typified by the nightly placing of bubble gum bubbles on the hats of unsuspecting teammates and everyone gathering around the thermostat in the clubhouse to watch Albert Belle (aka ‘Mr. Freeze') take a few more swings at some imaginary climate-controlling demon only he could see.

This Cavs season is shaping up like one of those special events that don't happen all that often. You have a group of likeable, professional athletes going out nearly every night and just destroying teams in one way or another. That destruction is coming either on the scoreboard in the form of blowout wins or it's coming in the form of demoralizing, hard fought victories when they don't seem likely.

This past week was a perfect example of the damage this team is doing. The Cavs had to go out on the road and play 4 games in 5 nights against some quality teams. That they started out the trip by getting rolled by the Lakers makes the fact that they finished the trip going 3-1 all the more impressive.

After the Lakers exposed the Cavs lack of size and penetration ability on Monday the Portland Trail Blazers had to be licking their chops. But Mo Williams and LeBron James combined for 67 points to get the Cavs a big win and right their listing ship. A weird, wonderful finish in Oakland against Golden State came on Friday when LBJ hit a fall away 18-footer over Ronny Turiaf at the buzzer and won a game that past Cavs teams would have lost.

That ensured the Cavs of at least a split on the trip and 2-2 was more than good enough for most of us. Especially when you considered that game #4 of the roadie was the next night in Salt Lake and that it started just 17 hours after the emotional win over the Warriors. Especially when you further considered that the Jazz had been sitting for almost 3 nights at home, getting healthy and plotting ways to slow down the Cavs to a greater extent than fatigue alone could slow them down.

I had zero expectations going into the Jazz game. In fact, the Jazz were 3-point favorites according to the on-line sports books and Utah -3 looked really good to me. Thankfully I was not where I could act on that feeling because the Cavs stepped up on a night when you would have probably allowed them a sluggish effort and instead bounced the Jazz in Salt Lake City.

Good teams win that bounce-back game in Portland. Good teams get it done against a poor team like the Warriors in Oakland. But only special teams look at that game in Utah as an opportunity to add to an impressive trip and an impressive season by going above and beyond expectations.

That's what I'm talking about when I put this Cavs team in potentially the same breath as the '95 Indians. With every improbable win they add to their confidence and their resume'. With every improbable win they serve notice to other squads that these are not your father's Cavaliers. They were a tough out every night that LeBron took the floor prior to this season. But this season, with the addition of Williams and with other roles clearly defined they have everything a team needs to run the table in June. They've got the superstar who can carry a club, they've got weapons lined up behind LBJ to hurt you if he doesn't and they've got

that look.

You can't always easily define it or explain it, but you know it when you see it.

And if you've been around this town for any length of time, you know you better appreciate it when it does roll around.

Odd Man (Men) Out

Mark DeRosa, Jhonny Peralta, Asdrubal Cabrera, Ryan Garko, Victor Martinez, Travis Hafner, Jamey Carroll, Kelly Shoppach and Andy Marte.

That's 9 players who are competing for 6 starting positions (C, 1B, 2B, 3B, SS and DH). The first 6 have the best shot at being in the opening day lineup and Carroll and Shoppach are going nowhere. See any name that will likely be roster fodder? See any name that will be missed?

Try as I might, and despite how good a kid he may be, I just can't bring myself to bemoan the expected departure of Marte from this club. A heralded prospect for years the kid just never

developed to the point where keeping him around benefits anyone. He has the same holes in his swing he had when he got here. If Marte's suitcase has the same amount of holes his swing does he's going to be dropping a lot of socks and boxers between his home and Goodyear, AZ in a couple weeks.

I don't subscribe to the theory that Marte never got a fair shake here. He did. He just didn't produce. He actually more got more opportunities due to his exalted prospect status. One gets tired of hearing that his playing time was sporadic. Most young players face that same issue. Marte's had over 500 Abs in the big leagues. He's responded with a .211 average and 9 career HRs.

I also don't want to hear that some of his at bats came in the cold. Baseball is played in April and May as well as October. It's cold then. Every player who has earned a spot and become a productive player faced the same challenges.

Call it like it is; Andy Marte just looks like he peaked before he turned 20.

As mentioned earlier, he's reportedly a good kid and by all accounts a hard worker. And he still has relative youth (he's 25)

on his side. Maybe he goes somewhere else, changes his approach and salvages his career. I hope he does for his sake. But his days as a viable option on the Indians roster appear to be over.

Chalk another one up to the Big Tease Syndrome.

Etcetera

- Given how the Browns turned off so many of us during the final 10 weeks of the season it wasn't all that hard to be without NFL football this past weekend. Just makes it like, oh, the 12th or 13th straight week without professional here in Cleveland.

- I really think Randy Lerner has struck gold with his current President of Football Operations. There's not a bad word that comes to mind when talking about that guy. I also tried to call the Media Relations Director to see which members of the staff were doing the college scouting these days. No one answered that phone either.

If the Browns weren't a joke by the time their season ended in December they are certainly working extremely hard at present time to remove all doubt.

The Cleveland Experience

Rich Swerbinsky and I launched our maiden voyage into the internet radio world this past Wednesday. We're grateful to Jay Levine from
www.letsgotribe.com
and to John Hnat from
www.theclevelandfan.com
for stopping in and talking Tribe and Cavs respectively. It was a solid debut for all involved and we're looking forward to episode #2 this Wednesday. We'll have Anthony Castrovince from
www.mlb.com

to talk more Indians as spring training approaches and we'll also have Scott Wright from
www.draftcountdown.com
to talk about what the Browns are likely to do in the April NFL draft (if their clock doesn't run out and their pick is not forfeited).

And it's also the Wednesday before the Super Bowl. That means TCF's Mike ‘Lead Pipe' Piper will be a special guest and he'll be discussing the big game between Pittsburgh and Arizona. More specifically, Lead Pipe will be talking big game wagering including the spread itself as well as the myriad of prop bets available to sports bettors.

Check it out right here.