

Cavaliers End The 76ers' Home Winning Streak

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On Saturday night the Cleveland Cavaliers beat the Philadelphia 76ers at home 121-112, ending a 20-game homecourt winning streak, a tie for the 5th longest in the 76ers' history. Cleveland outscored the visibly lethargic 76ers in the first quarter 31-23 and managed to largely control the pace of the game throughout the night.

The lack of energy and lack of rebounding from the 76ers was apparent early on and translated into many more shot opportunities for the Cavaliers. By the end of the first quarter, the Cavaliers had taken roughly 10 more shots than the 76ers. By the end of the game, they would take 18 more shots. The Cavaliers ended the game with 11 more rebounds, and 14 offensive rebounds to the 76ers' 4.

During the postgame interview Brett Brown, visibly frustrated, gave uncharacteristically terse responses. His most significant soundbyte was: "We had no spirit. We didn't play defense in front of our home fans." The 76ers' players' postgame interviews carried that same tone. Jimmy Butler said: "We came out with zero energy, not even low energy. Zero."

Though neither team's bench contributed hugely to the scoring, Jordan Clarkson came off the bench to give the Cavaliers 19 points and 3 rebounds in the second half to ultimately provide the scoring and energy they needed to get the win over the 76ers. The fact that Clarkson hit pull-up jumpers over Joel Embiid and Landry Shamet, blew kisses at hecklers in the crowd, and drove past Ben Simmons to the lane, all while Jordan's ex, now Simmons' current love interest, Kendall Jenner, sat courtside, would set a tone to finish out the game that the lackluster 76ers could not overcome.

In this modern sports world where we all look at some combination of analytics and Colin Cowherd's so-called "manalytics," the numbers and the manalytics bear out a similar conclusion: a noticeable lack of energy on the parts of the 76ers. We saw something similar in the close home victory over the Phoenix Suns on Monday night. It looked as if the 76ers had gotten so comfortable winning at home that they didn't take either the Suns or Cavs seriously as opponents this week. Whereas the 76ers managed a close win over the Suns on Monday night, last night the Cavs pulled away to get the win.

We have seen the 76ers struggle with 2nd half closeouts for much of last season and into the start of this season as well. It remains to be seen whether they can break this pattern and start to present a more consistent performance, whether playing teams at the top or bottom of the standings.