Scouting CLE · from Atlanta's side

Cleveland Cavaliers

2026-27: 4 games (Oct 22 @ PHI · Oct 24 vs BKN · Oct 26 vs MIN · Oct 28 vs WAS) · baseline 2025-26 regular season

CLE @ ATL
Thu Oct 29, 2026 · 8:00 PM ET
Game 0022600144

INJURY REPORT & SCHEDULE · official report of 2026-10-29, read 2026-10-29 22:45 UTC; statuses as listed, no reasons

CLE	Khalifa Diop: Out	Nae'Qwan Tomlin: Out	Jaylon Tyson: Questionable	Meleek Thomas: Questionable	
ATL	Henri Veesaar: Out	Mouhamed Gueye: Out	Jalen Wilson: Questionable	Keshon Gilbert: Questionable	RayJ Dennis: Questionable

CLE: second night of a back-to-back, 3 games in 4 nights, previous game Oct 28 vs WAS.

IN TEN SECONDS

1. **Last season: 9th-fewest turnovers (14.2/100), 9th-highest 3PA share (44%), 5th-best rim protection (63%).**
2. **Scoring last season: D. Mitchell 27.9/g (24.8 so far), J. Harden 23.6/g (15.8 so far), E. Mobley 18.2/g (20.0 so far).**

TEAM KEYS

- Perimeter team last season: 44% 3PA share (9th of 30). Chase Mitchell 36%, Harden 38%, Merrill 42%, Tyson 44%, Watson 41%; wall up on Allen, Proctor, Porter Jr..
- Rim protection: opponents shoot 63% at the rim (5th best). Drive to kick; don't finish into the bigs.
- Efficient: eFG% 56.1% (4th best).
- They finish: 67.4% at the rim (8th best). No free runs; wall up early.
- They take care of the ball: 14.2 TO per 100 (9th fewest). Don't gamble for steals.
- They give up 3s: opponents take 43% of their shots from 3 (9th most). Space them; move it side to side.

STARTERS · LAST GAME

45 Donovan Mitchell

G · 6-2 · age 30 · 9 yrs · STARTED LAST GAME

25-26 CLE · 69 GP · 33.6 MPG · 27.9 pts · 4.5 reb · 5.7 ast · 36.3% 3P on 8.8 3PA · 86% FT
26-27 4 GP · 35.1 MPG · 24.8 pts · 6.2 reb · 5.2 ast · 46% 3P on 6.0 3PA

3P% **above average** · Rim FG% **average** · FT% **excellent** · Ball security **good** · Gets to line **good**

- Capable 3: 36.3% on 8.8/g (56th pct). Closeout under control, contest every one.
- Run him off the line into the help: 60% on 558 drives but only 23% of his shots at the rim (average, 42nd pct). Closeout short and high-hand; stay down on the fake.
- Pull-up shooter: 34% of his shots are pull-ups (86th pct, 36%). Stay attached over screens; contest without fouling.

1 James Harden

G · 6-4 · age 37 · 17 yrs · STARTED LAST GAME

25-26 CLE/LAC · 70 GP · 34.8 MPG · 23.6 pts · 4.8 reb · 8.0 ast · 37.5% 3P on 8.2 3PA · 88% FT
26-27 4 GP · 34.9 MPG · 15.8 pts · 4.2 reb · 6.8 ast · 29% 3P on 7.8 3PA

3P% **good** · Rim FG% **below average** · FT% **elite** · Ball security **bad** · Gets to line **elite**

- Lives at the line: 0.47 FTA per FGA (elite, 94th pct), 4.6 fouls drawn/g, 88% FT. Verticality, hands back, no reach.
- Pressure him: 15.3 TO per 100 usage (bad, 15th pct), 54% of them bad passes; 14 TO in 4 games so far. Hands in the lanes; 8.0 AST/g, so stay home on shooters when he drives.
- Knockdown 3: 37.5% on 8.2/g (67th pct). No help off him; run him off the line.

4 Evan Mobley

C · 6-11 · age 25 · 5 yrs · STARTED LAST GAME

25-26 CLE · 64 GP · 32.0 MPG · 18.2 pts · 9.0 reb · 3.6 ast · 30.2% 3P on 3.2 3PA · 61% FT
26-27 4 GP · 34.8 MPG · 20.0 pts · 9.8 reb · 2.8 ast · 12/18 3P

3P% **bad** · Rim FG% **excellent** · FT% **bad** · Ball security **good** · Gets to line **excellent**

- Elite finisher: 74% at the rim (88th pct) on 404 attempts, 48% of his shots. No free runs; build the wall early.
- Volume 3s at 30.2%, 3.2/g (9th pct): make him shoot contested, no fly-bys.
- Lives at the line: 0.34 FTA per FGA (excellent, 80th pct), 3.5 fouls drawn/g, 61% FT. Verticality, hands back, no reach.

8 Peyton Watson

G · 6-7 · age 24 · 4 yrs · STARTED LAST GAME · NEW · DEN LAST SEASON

25-26 DEN · 54 GP · 29.6 MPG · 14.6 pts · 4.9 reb · 2.1 ast · 41.1% 3P on 3.6 3PA · 73% FT
26-27 4 GP · 31.6 MPG · 14.0 pts · 4.5 reb · 2.2 ast · 3/18 3P

3P% **elite** · Rim FG% **average** · FT% **below average** · Ball security **average** · Gets to line **good**

- Knockdown 3: 41.1% on 3.6/g (91st pct). No help off him; run him off the line.
- Corner specialist: 52% from the corners (83 att), 33% above the break (114). No help off the corners; help off him on top.

31 Jarrett Allen

C · 6-9 · age 28 · 9 yrs · STARTED LAST GAME

25-26 CLE · 55 GP · 27.1 MPG · 15.3 pts · 8.4 reb · 1.8 ast · 10.0% 3P on 0.2 3PA · 71% FT
26-27 4 GP · 28.2 MPG · 13.2 pts · 9.0 reb · 1.0 ast · 1/1 3P

Rim FG% **elite** · FT% **bad** · Ball security **good** · Gets to line **elite**

- Lives at the line: 0.50 FTA per FGA (elite, 97th pct), 4.0 fouls drawn/g, 71% FT. Verticality, hands back, no reach.
- Elite finisher: 77% at the rim (95th pct) on 292 attempts, 57% of his shots. No free runs; build the wall early.
- Non-shooter (0.2 3PA/g): sag off him and help from him; no closeouts needed.

BENCH

5 Sam Merrill G · 6-4 · age 30 · 6 yrs

25-26 CLE · 51 GP · 26.6 MPG · 12.7 pts · 2.6 reb · 2.4 ast · 41.6% 3P on 7.2 3PA · 86% FT
26-27 4 GP · 24.1 MPG · 7.2 pts · 3.0 reb · 2.0 ast · 5/18 3P
3P% **elite** Ball security **elite** Gets to line **bad**

- Doesn't turn it over: 7.6 TO per 100 usage (95th pct). Don't gamble for steals; play him straight up.
- Doesn't get to the line: 0.14 FTA per FGA (17th pct). Be physical; the whistle is quiet.
- Knockdown 3: 41.6% on 7.2/g (93rd pct). No help off him; run him off the line.
- Corner specialist: 54% from the corners (63 att), 39% above the break (307). No help off the corners; help off him on top.

20 Jaylon Tyson G-F · 6-6 · age 23 · 2 yrs Questionable

25-26 CLE · 65 GP · 27.0 MPG · 13.3 pts · 5.1 reb · 2.2 ast · 44.4% 3P on 4.5 3PA · 73% FT
26-27 4 GP · 21.4 MPG · 9.0 pts · 3.0 reb · 3.2 ast · 4/17 3P
3P% **elite** Rim FG% **bad** FT% **below average** Ball security **average** Gets to line **bad**

- Poor finisher: 59% at the rim (bad, 12th pct) on 224 attempts. Meet him at the rim; verticality, no fouls.
- Knockdown 3: 44.4% on 4.5/g (99th pct). No help off him; run him off the line.

33 Mario Hezonja F-G · 6-8 · age 31 · 5 yrs

25-26 — · 0 GP · — MPG · — pts · — reb · — ast · — 3P on — 3PA · — FT
26-27 4 GP · 17.6 MPG · 6.8 pts · 3.5 reb · 1.5 ast · 4/14 3P

15 Meleek Thomas G · 6-3 · age 20 · rookie Questionable

25-26 — · 0 GP · — MPG · — pts · — reb · — ast · — 3P on — 3PA · — FT
26-27 2 GP · 19.8 MPG · 13.0 pts · 3.0 reb · 0.5 ast · 4/6 3P

24 Tyrese Proctor G · 6-4 · age 22 · 1 yrs

25-26 CLE · 49 GP · 10.7 MPG · 5.2 pts · 1.3 reb · 1.4 ast · 32.8% 3P on 2.5 3PA · 90% FT
26-27 3 GP · 7.3 MPG · 2.3 pts · 1.0 reb · 1.3 ast · 1/2 3P
3P% **bad**

- Low-volume, 32.8% from 3 (2.5/g): help off him in the gaps.

9 Craig Porter Jr. G · 6-1 · age 26 · 3 yrs DID NOT PLAY LAST GAME

25-26 CLE · 63 GP · 18.0 MPG · 4.6 pts · 3.4 reb · 3.2 ast · 35.9% 3P on 1.5 3PA · 60% FT
26-27 2 GP · 6.3 MPG · 1.5 pts · 2.0 reb · 0.5 ast · 1/1 3P
Ball security **bad**

- Pressure him: 17.6 TO per 100 usage (bad, 7th pct), 60% of them bad passes; 3 TO in 2 games so far. Hands in the lanes.
- Non-shooter (1.5 3PA/g, 36% from 3): go under screens, help off him.

Not seen yet: N. Tomlin (#35 F, CLE 15.8 MPG last season), T. Bryant (#3 C-F, CLE 12.3 MPG last season), T. Enaruna (#21 F, CLE 9.5 MPG last season), R. Minix (#12 F, CLE/SAS 6.5 MPG last season), K. Diop (#18 C), E. Udeh, Jr. (#88 C).

GAME PLAN BOXES

FOUL HIM LATE (FT)

- **E. Mobley** — 61% FT (290 FTA, 4th pct), 17/27 in clutch
- **J. Allen** — 71% FT (257 FTA, 19th pct), 15/19 in clutch
- **P. Watson** — 73% FT (189 FTA, 26th pct), 9/13 in clutch
- **J. Tyson** — 73% FT (105 FTA, 27th pct), 10/14 in clutch
- Don't foul: J. Harden 88% FT; D. Mitchell 86% FT

FOUL TROUBLE

- Nobody over 4.5 fouls per 36 last season.

SHOT PROFILE · ZONES AND DIET

SHOT ZONES · SHARE OF FGA, FG%

	25-26	FG%	26-27	FG%
Restricted area	30%	67%	–	–
Paint (non-RA)	18%	48%	–	–
Mid-range	8%	45%	–	–
Corner 3	11%	38%	–	–
Above the break 3	33%	35%	–	–

SHOT DIET · SHARE OF FGA, FG%

	25-26	FG%	26-27	FG%
Pull-ups	18%	37%	–	–
Drives	28%	57%	–	–
Finishes	11%	71%	–	–
Catch-and-shoot 3s	29%	37%	–	–
Other shots	15%	50%	–	–

Zones from the play-by-play (corner 3s merged), FG% on those attempts. Diet from the shot descriptors: pull-ups (pull-ups and step-backs), drives (2s driving or on the run), finishes (cuts, putbacks, alley-oops, tips), catch-and-shoot 3s (3s with no descriptor: a proxy, the feed records no touch time), other shots (turnarounds, fadeaways, floaters and every other move, and 2s with no descriptor). Bars: last season's share of FGA. This season's play-by-play is not available yet: its columns read –.

No change flags yet: this season's play-by-play is not available (4 games, box scores only), so no rate is compared with last season.

ROTATION · LAST SEASON RATES

#	PLAYER	MIN 26-27	MPG 25-26	FGA/G	3PA SHARE	3P%	RA SHARE	RA FG%	FT%	PULL-UP SHARE	DRIVE SHARE	C&S 3 SHARE	AST'D SHARE	TO/100 USAGE	FTA/FGA	PF/36	FOULS DRAWN/G	FLAGS
45	D. Mitchell	140.2	33.6	20.0	44%	36.3%	23%	64%	86%	34%	40%	34%	38%	11.1	0.31	2.5	4.6	–
1	J. Harden	139.6	34.8	16.0	51%	37.5%	21%	62%	88%	46%	36%	26%	25%	15.3	0.47	2.0	4.6	–
4	E. Mobley	139.3	32.0	13.2	24%	30.2%	48%	74%	61%	6%	27%	82%	69%	11.1	0.34	2.8	3.5	–
8	P. Watson	126.5	29.6	10.8	34%	41.1%	34%	64%	73%	15%	30%	77%	74%	12.3	0.33	3.1	2.6	–
31	J. Allen	113.0	27.1	9.4	2%	10.0%	57%	77%	71%	0%	20%	90%	82%	10.5	0.50	2.2	4.0	–
5	S. Merrill	96.4	26.6	9.4	77%	41.6%	10%	82%	86%	23%	11%	67%	91%	7.6	0.14	3.3	1.8	–
20	J. Tyson	85.5	27.0	10.2	44%	44.4%	34%	59%	73%	3%	30%	89%	82%	12.2	0.16	3.3	1.5	–
33	M. Hezonja	70.4	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
15	M. Thomas	39.5	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
24	T. Proctor	21.8	10.7	4.5	57%	32.8%	23%	62%	90%	28%	29%	56%	53%	14.1	0.19	3.9	0.7	–
9	C. Porter Jr.	12.6	18.0	4.0	36%	35.9%	30%	68%	60%	24%	34%	52%	62%	17.6	0.16	2.1	0.8	–

HOW TO READ IT

Baseline = 2025-26 regular season (81 games; 1 left out: score not verified; a player's baseline covers every game he played, with any team). Recent = 2026-27 (4 games). For each rate, shrink the recent proportion toward the baseline with a Beta prior of strength m (empirical-Bayes flavour): p1_shrunk = (k1 + m*p0)/(n1 + m), with m = 60 for shot-diet / zone / assisted shares, m = 250 for FG%-type rates (rim FG%, 3P%; 3P% needs ~750 attempts to stabilize, so a 10-game 3P% is almost never flaggable by design), m = 60 for turnover rate. FLAG when |p1_shrunk - p0| >= 0.06 AND |z| >= 2.0 where z = (k1/n1 - p0)/sqrt(p0*(1-p0)/n1) (raw recent proportion against the baseline proportion, SE from p0) AND n1 >= 15 recent trials. Here the windows are disjoint.

Grades are words on one scale: elite ≥ 90th percentile, excellent 75–89, good 60–74, above average 50–59, average 40–49, below average 25–39, bad < 25. Shooting and ball-security percentiles are computed from the play-by-play among qualified players (3P% 100+ 3PA, rim FG% 100+ restricted-area attempts, FT% 75+ FTA, rates per FGA 300+ FGA, ball security 300+ usage events). Starters are the players who started the team's last game. Statuses are the official injury report's, as listed, with the report's date and the time it was read, never a reason; a carded player listed at either of the two most serious statuses keeps his card but leaves the free-throw and foul boxes. Every sentence above is produced from these numbers by fixed templates.

Computed by NightlyHoops from play-by-play and box scores of regular-season games, and the league's official injury report (statuses only). Data collected 2026-10-29; report built 2026-10-29 22:45 UTC.