

NETS DOWNPLAY LOSS TO PISTONS

By **NICK PARISH**

Accent the positive.

That's the vibe coming from the Nets following Wednesday's 93-83 loss to the Pistons. That loss, featuring missed layups and blown defensive coverages, put the team under .500 (7-8) and soured the cream of a homecoming after a successful West Coast swing — if you see the glass as half-empty.

The Nets don't, though, and won't dwell on the loss. The Pistons, they said, have their game together, with a starting five that's well established. New Jersey, still developing, did plenty right to hang with them most of the game.

"We had a lot of quality, quality possessions," coach Lawrence Frank said. "Our paint attacks, our intent on the offensive end was tremendous. Sometimes the basketball gods just take [it] away."

Jason Kidd said it's too early to worry.

"Guys played hard. We're building. We're still going forward, and we take our effort from last night and continue to put that through the rest of these games, and we're going to have a lot more wins than losses."

Outscoring Detroit in the paint 48-22 was a stat the Nets hung their hats on yesterday, but when stymied inside, the mercurial Pistons offense moved focus to the perimeter, making 10 of 20 shots from 3-point range.

"They shot the ball extremely well," Richard Jefferson said. "Whenever a team hits 50 percent of their 3s and the game is coming down to the last few minutes, you're still doing a pretty good job of other things."

The Pistons aren't the only team asserting themselves from beyond the arc against the Nets. In Jersey's last 10 games, five different teams have cashed in 10 or more times from 3-point range.

"We made some defensive mistakes, and they took advantage of them," Frank said. "That's why they are who they are and that's why we're learning to be. This group has been together for 15 games, and they've been together for 155."

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Frank said Vince Carter, who appeared to have aggravated his back injury Wednesday, is fine. "I think here and there he may be a little bit sore," Frank said . . . Today is the last day to bid on a Nets VIP game package benefiting The Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation. Fans can bid for the package at www.nba.com or www.wnba.com.

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