

Papa Cass breathes easier, and takes a shot back at the national sports media in this reaction piece to the announcement by LeBron James that he will accept the Cavs contract extension offer.



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We can now take a deep breath and get a good night's sleep before we find something else to worry about. LeBron James is, in fact, staying in Cleveland.

On Saturday, he made public his intention to accept the five-year, \$80 million contract extension offered by the Cavaliers on July 1.

The contract will begin after next season and run through the end of the 2011-12 season, though LeBron reportedly has an opt-out clause after the fourth season of the deal.

Sam Smith, Bill Simmons and all the other national media vultures fantasizing about LeBron getting picked away from Cleveland's rotting carcass can now

unofficially stuff it.

The can officially stuff it when LeBron actually signs the deal, reportedly on Wednesday or shortly thereafter. LeBron's agent, Leon Rose, has said LeBron wants to get the contract signed before he reports to USA Basketball on July 19.

So, what do we worry about now? The chance that something could go horribly awry before LeBron inks the deal? A catastrophic injury while playing for the U.S. team?

Outsiders would call it an anxiety disorder. Clevelanders call it creative worrying.

The plain truth is that, if you are any kind of basketball fan at all, LeBron is going to make you enjoy the Cavs in spite of yourself. Aside from money, it's the reason he is staying.

While many residents of this area speak in derogatory terms of the city they call home, LeBron is proud of this place.

We already know we can learn a thing or two about basketball from LeBron. Maybe we can learn a thing or two about regional pride. You look at Cleveland and see an unsalvageable hulk of a city, a place to be abandoned, a place with no hope. LeBron sees a city he can pick up and place on his shoulders and carry to great things, if only within the 94 feet of the basketball court.

As ESPN's [Marc Stein says](#) , the truth is that LeBron wants to be here. That might be tough for a lot of Northeast Ohioans to grasp, but LeBron could go anywhere in two years, and he wants to stay here. In little, old, burned-out, past-its-prime Cleveland.

He is spurning millions in endorsement deal money to do it, too. That's devotion, my friends.

Sooner or later, LeBron will make you stop worrying, sit back and enjoy the ride he is giving us. He wants to be the man who brings Cleveland its first professional sports title since 1964. He just might do it, too.

We have now passed the "possibly just keeping him warm for another city" phase with LeBron and have moved on to "Undisputed King of Cleveland and Ohio." Which is what he has been, and has wanted to be, all along.