



The Cleveland Cavaliers hired a new head coach Thursday and it's only the second biggest story in Cleveland sports. The first, of course, is the simple fact that LeBron James, for the first time in his professional career, is officially no longer a member of the Cavaliers.

It may be that James re-signs with the Cavs but for now he's not on the team's roster. It seems strange to actually write that statement because while July 1st has been a day circled on the calendar of Cavs fans for years now it's hard to believe the day actually arrived.

Yet it has and on that very same day the Cavs found themselves with a new coach, someone well respected around the league and, for the most part, a marquee name. For those who think that the Cavs future is only about James, this runs counter to that narrative. That means that soon we'll see a whole bunch of analysis by those thrown for this loop and as with almost everything else you've heard or read for the last several weeks, it will probably be wrong.

Here's the most salient points to know at the moment about Byron Scott, the new head coach. He is highly coveted and the best coach available at the moment. He's got credibility with players borne of experience and a resume, including twice coaching the New Jersey Nets to the

Getting It Done

Written by {ga=gdbenz}

Saturday, July 03 2010 12:00 AM - Last Updated Saturday, July 03 2010 6:18 AM

NBA Finals and winning a title three times as a player with the Los Angeles Lakers. He also wasn't exactly begging for the Cavs job. He had other options, including remaining a highly paid NBA analyst.

It was widely reported by supposed league insiders that Scott would not commit to any job until he knew Phil Jackson's status in Los Angeles. Jackson has hinted at retirement and these league insiders said that Scott not only wanted that job but would be the frontrunner if Jackson indeed did retire. We all know James' uncertain status at the moment.

To all the ESPN and Sports Illustrated know-it-alls, not to mention anyone with ready access to the internet, this of course meant that the Cavs would find themselves without a head coach during the James sweepstakes, severely handicapping their chances of re-signing him. It also meant to them that should James not re-sign, the Cavs were a dead franchise walking and would have to settle for, at best, another Mike Brown as its head coach.

And yet Scott is signed, sealed and delivered. Hmmm, I wonder what went wrong?

It's simple, really. These so-called analysts and insiders are mostly navel gazers with no greater insight than Russ who works in the mailroom. As simple as adding $1 + 1$ would appear to be, they keep coming up with "3" as the answer mainly because they mostly rely on each other as their sources for the next great rumor.

What they lack in insight and factual information they make up for it with an abundance of confidence. And yet as they now try to explain exactly what went wrong in their math this time, they're not likely to land on the one thing they overlooked, Dan Gilbert.

And if they ever bothered to really think about that for a moment, they'd begin to realize that Gilbert has a way of actually getting things done. Casino gambling in Ohio was turned down by the voters repeatedly. Gilbert entered the fray when everyone else said it couldn't get done, assembled the right team, played the appropriate amount of hardball and in the end got what he wanted, a casino that he'll own that will be within spitting distance of his arena.

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Now all Gilbert's done is again get the best coach available. Gilbert landed early on Tom Izzo and he would have been an interesting choice. But he was always a reach anyway, given his current situation at Michigan State. When that didn't work out, Gilbert didn't pout. Instead he went about getting Scott and with that settled a front office that some said was a mess. It never was.

The signing of Scott is an object lesson in how the Cavs operate and provides a key lesson for those trying to forecast what James will do.

Scott is extremely familiar with the league. He knows the personalities and the players, on the court, in the front office and in the owner's suite. The fact that Scott could be convinced to take the Cleveland job without any guarantees about James or Jackson speaks volumes about what he thinks of Gilbert.

Scott is convinced that whatever plays out with any particular player, including James, Gilbert is prepared to spend as necessary to keep this team in contention.

It's a much different promise than the kind Larry Dolan made when he bought the Indians. In the first place, Gilbert never made any such public proclamation. Instead all he's done is actually gone about doing it, time and time again. He's spent huge sums on a state-of-the-art practice facility and in upgrading the Quicken Loans Arena. He's shown no fear of paying basketball's luxury tax, which is hefty, in order to maintain a high quality roster.

In short, he's done everything Dolan has not. Consider, for example, this past season. Sure it had the overarching dynamic of being perhaps James' last season and thus potentially the last best chance for the Cavs to really compete for the NBA title, but all Gilbert did was empower former general manager to spend and trade and do whatever Ferry felt necessary to get this team over the hump.

The fact that Ferry wasn't successful doesn't mean that the effort was lacking. Putting together a team is far more art than science anyway. But if you're Scott and doing your due diligence, what this tells you is that Gilbert is willing to provide the necessary resources.

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It's really much the same analysis James will use as well and, what's more, every team that covets James seems to understand that point, despite how many time the writers supposedly covering this story miss it. It may sound impressive, for example, that the Nets' new owner is flying in from Russia to be part of the meeting with James, but the simple truth is that he had no other choice.

This aspect of James' career is all about business and that means dealing with and understanding ownership. If James' were buying a team, it wouldn't much matter who owned it previously. But the fact that he'll essentially be in partnership with this owner, it behooves James (or anyone, for that matter) to get to know your potential partner well.

It's obvious that Scott learned enough about Gilbert during the interview process to become convinced that he wanted to partner with him and vice versa. James is going through much the same process now, trying to learn what he can about the prospective business he'll be a part of for a long time before making a decision.

And yet all we've been fed by too many experts with too much time on their hands is dribble and drabble about World Wide Wes and Chris Bosh and billboards and rallies and real estate agents and the like, none of which alone or in combination much matters when real people come together to make real live decisions.

When all this is over in the next few weeks, go back and read some of the stories that have consumed your recent days to laugh at how foolish it all ended up being. Gilbert has always been the key to the Cavs future, with or without James and that hasn't changed since the day Gilbert arrived.

And if someone wants to bet you against Gilbert getting James, take that bet. Gilbert just has a knack for making those who bet against him look foolish.