Somewhere Braylon Edwards and Kellen Winslow, Jr. must be scratching their heads. At various points during the last Browns season each popped off to the media about the pathetic state that was the offense. In the process, each made the kind of headlines they neither could have liked and were being excoriated by fans and media alike for being selfish and aloof. But on a different day and by a different player, similar comments are seen as leadership.

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At various points during the last Browns season each popped off to the media about the pathetic state that was the offense. Each railed against the plodding and ill-conceived offensive schemes that seemed to make insufficient use of the few skilled players on the roster, namely Edwards and Winslow. In the process, each made the kind of headlines they neither could have liked. They were being excoriated by fans and media alike for being selfish and aloof, Cleveland's answer to Terrell Owens, times two, even if their comments rang true.

But on a different day and by a different player, similar comments are seen as leadership. It all depends on the speaker. Earlier this week, as he did earlier this season, LeBron James took his complaints about the pathetic state of the Cavs offense directly to the media and his comments hardly caused a ripple, let alone controversy.

Most will recall a few weeks ago when the Cavs entered their most recent funk, somewhere on

the West Coast. Head coach Mike Brown's view was that the main problem was a lack of defensive intensity. When asked about Brown's analysis, James countered that the problems lay more with the offense. This public contradiction of the head coach garnered no headlines. None. Just a few short weeks later, with the Cavs funk deepening, the scrutiny on Brown has increased. And rather than diffuse the issue, here comes James once again throwing a little more gas on the fire by publicly taking on his head coach, if not by name then by description.

James told the media that the Cavs need to break out of Brown's boring and predictable half-court offense and get into their offensive schemes more quickly. He wants to run more in order to create more fast break opportunities. James even had the statistics to back up his point, telling the media, in case no one noticed, that in multiple games this year, the Cavs have had no fast break points. According to James, "we've got to find a way to get easy buckets. I don't get easy buckets like I did in the past. Pushing up the tempo can help." Indeed, the Cavs rarely push the tempo. Brown seems more comfortable with an offense that pokes and prods that too often results in James taking an ill-advised jumper with two defenders on him as the shot clock winds down to zero.

What is astounding in all of this, though, is not so much the accuracy of James' insights as the fact that his comments have largely gone unnoticed or unchallenged. In many respects, what James is saying is every bit as inflammatory as the comments Edwards and Winslow made about the Browns, if not more so. His words, carefully chosen, were aimed directly at Brown in the same way as Edwards and Winslow directed their comments at Crennel. Brown, like Crennel, is a defensive coach first and foremost who seems to treat offense like an afterthought. Eventually the stilted nature of this approach starts to frustrate those who are paid to play offense and eventually that frustration will boil over as it did with Edwards and Winslow with the Browns and as it is doing now with James and the Cavs.

But where Crennel sloughed off both Edwards and Winslow by suggesting that they are merely young players with much to learn, Brown was more deferential. He not only didn't downplay the comments he embraced them, albeit reluctantly, by saying that he is open to tweaking his offense as suggested, so long as it doesn't result in running just to run. Whether Brown actually does tweak the offense is iffy, given his nature. But even as the words of James must have stung, Brown seemed to take them seriously.

This is not to call out James for being selfish or for attempting to undermine the team, far from it. It's to point out that the similar comments made under similar circumstances can have vastly different consequences. The difference, of course, is credibility.

At the time their comments were made, neither Edwards nor Winslow had yet accomplished much of anything in their professional careers. They still haven't. As a result, their motives are considered questionable. All James has done on the other hand is live up to the unprecedented hype he faced coming out of high school by becoming one of the best players on the planet. No one questions that he's team-oriented. Even those who have watched James only casually over the years can tell you that the one attribute that stands out most is his willingness to get his teammates involved in the game. He is a pass first, shoot second player with a desire to win that is unquestioned. His skills and attributes are universally recognized as evidenced by the fact that he was the leading vote getter this year for the NBA All-Star game. His motives are beyond question.

In many ways, James is like his Nike compatriot Tiger Woods. More often than not, like Woods, his interviews are bland. He rarely if ever ventures very far out on a limb settling for clichéd platitudes over thoughtful analysis. But, like Woods, when James does have something more to say, it carries additional gravitas. Not only are people not offended, they're thankful because he's saying what needs to be said.

If Edwards and Winslow are indeed scratching their heads over what appears to be inconsistent treatment by fans of media of them versus James, they should remember that the difference between being viewed as a whiner or a leader often boils down to not simply talking the talk, but being able to walk it as well. With Edwards and Winslow, the jury is still out on that question. With James, that verdict was delivered long ago.