It's tough to get excited about basketball in early October but the Cavaliers are saying that you should. At least, that seemed to be the sentiment from the first day of training camp, as the Cavs opened their practice court to the media. Both LeBron and newcomer Mo Williams laid out their lofty expectations for this season. And we sent our guy Sam Amico out to the Cavs practice facility yesterday on media day to take it all in for us.

INDEPENDENCE - It's tough to get excited about basketball in early October but the Cavaliers are saying that you should.

At least, that seemed to be the sentiment from the first day of training camp, as the Cavs opened their practice court to the media.

No less than LeBron James called the current batch of Cavs the best since he's been a pro, and newcomer Mo Williams said the team has just one goal in mind. You guessed it, the Cavs are thinking championship.

How does that sound for some lofty expectations?

"That's the goal, and we're not just talk," Williams said. "Every team in the league on media day is saying they are going to win a championship. But we're confident. We know that if we put in the work and focus, we can do it. It's all we talk about."

Williams himself is one of the biggest reasons the Cavs are thinking big. He came over in the summer trade involving Milwaukee and Oklahoma City, and is a point guard who can break down defenders off the dribble and drain the long-range jumper.

Basically, he's got the type of game Cavs fans have been crying for.

James gave the deal an "A" when it happened (he was in Beijing with the USA Olympic team at the time), and reiterated his strong feelings for Williams on Monday.

"Mo Williams is an unbelievable talent," James said. "You can watch any film of what he did to us last year in four games. It was like, 'Wow, he either has something against us or he's sending up smoke signals to go get him in a trade."

And to think all the Cavs had to do to land Williams was send one-dimensional whiner Damon Jones to the Bucks. Well, that and ship Joe Smith, a pro's pro of a forward, to the newly-named Thunder.

It's true that the loss of Smith thins out the frontcourt considerably -- but Cavs coach Mike Brown now possesses a backcourt with the speed and skills needed to implement the occasional fast break.

The Cavs' guard rotation is now very deep, if not overly consistent. Besides Williams, it consists of holdovers Daniel Gibson and Sasha Pavlovic, and first-time Cavs camp participants Wally Szczerbiak and Delonte West -- both of whom came over as part of the major trade in February.

The frontcourt? Well, that's a different story.

There's James at small forward, and that's a good thing. So is having Zydrunas Ilgauskas back at center.

But the jury is still out on aging-and-often-injured power forward Ben Wallace, who couldn't hit a wide-open layup when he was young and healthy. The same can be said about Anderson Varejao off the bench, which makes you wonder if the Cavs will get more than 10-12 points combined per game from their big people.

Unless, of course, first-round pick J.J. Hickson is further along offensively than even the Cavs could have hoped.

Still, James doesn't seem concerned -- using the Olympic gold medal he won this past summer to illustrate his confidence.

"If you can lead 11 of the best guys in the world, you can lead anybody," James said. "If I can lead Kobe Bryant and MVPs, I should be able to lead Daniel Gibson."

As you surely remember, the Cavs took eventual champion Boston to a Game 7 before falling in the Eastern Conference semifinals. Most Clevelanders will tell you the Cavs played the Celtics tougher than anyone in the postseason.

And if their superstar is saying they're better this season than last year ... well, then the sky is the truly the limit. Right?

Right, said James.

"There's not much of an excuse now," he said. "We have guys that can go out and play. Mo can dominate a game. We all know what I can do on the court. We had guys hold out for personal reasons last year. We had guys who were here, but not mentally here. It's just a different feeling."

TRAINING CAMP TIDBITS

* James addressed the rampant rumors that he will sign elsewhere when his current contract expires in 2010, telling reporters, "I've never given no indication I was leaving Cleveland. I never gave any indication I didn't like being here, every time I'm asked that question. I love being here. I love playing in front of these fans. My family is here. I grew up 30 miles away from here. I've never given any indication that I did not like playing for the Cleveland Cavaliers. Now, I did say I like the Yankees and the Cowboys (but) it has nothing to do with the Cavaliers."

* Just like all the Cavs, James spent much of the afternoon posing for photos for NBA.com and various other media outlets. On one occasion, Varejao moved in next to James while wearing a T-shirt that read "I'm With Stupid" while a photo was being snapped.

* Former NBA guard Michael Dickerson, a one-time scoring stud with the Vancouver (now Memphis) Grizzlies is also in camp. Dickerson's career was cut short by a series of knee injuries, and he hasn't played in the league in five years. He's now 33 years old and on the comeback trail.

* Center Lorenzen Wright, another former Grizzly, is also in camp and expected to provide some defense and energy off the bench in a pinch. He also talked glowingly about his role as a veteran who is helping teach youngsters like Hickson and second-round pick Darnell Jackson the tricks of the trade.

Sam Amico is the editor of ProBasketballNews.com and a frequent contributor to SportsTime Ohio and The Cleveland Fan.