Last week, LeBron James told reporters, "I signed a contract in 2006 with an option, and it would make no sense for me to sign that contract if I didn't keep my options open. I'll let you fill in the blanks." Sam Amico's only problem with it? He's too honest in interviews. Sam says LeBron needs a publicist, and that he's the man for the job. Sam tells our readers how he would have handled last week's presser, and also puts LeBron's actions and words into the proper perspective.

LeBron James needs a publicist and I'm just the man for the job.

Last week, the Cleveland superstar told reporters, "I signed a contract in 2006 with an option, and it would make no sense for me to sign that contract if I didn't keep my options open. I'll let you fill in the blanks."

As James' publicist, here is what I would have told him to say:

"I'll address all questions related to my contract after I sign another."

Simple as that, end of story, and with the exception of the New York media, we all get on with life.

Heck, James could have even saved himself a few words and followed any contract-related questions with two words: "Next question."

Want to know what James' problem is in these situations? Well, let me tell you. His problem is he's a nice guy. Not only that, he's pretty straightforward. He's great to the media, night after night after thankless question night.

He is also unlike so many celebrity athletes in that he actually goes out in public. I live eight miles from James in Akron (no, he doesn't care if you know where he lives), and I see him out and about doing regular-guy stuff on a regular basis.

As for reporters, there are times I'll be in the media scrum that circles LeBron and I just want to reach out and hit someone. Trust me, road rage has nothing on the feeling you get being around a lot of reporters. Yet LeBron always turns his head toward the person asking the question, looks them straight in the eye, and calmly answers -- every time, no matter what the question is.

I mean, we're talking about a guy who said his lone regret following the Cavaliers' elimination loss to Orlando wasn't his refusal to shake hands with the Magic, but the fact he skipped his post-game interview. "The only thing I apologize for that night is not doing the media," James said while in Chicago to promote his new documentary "More Than a Game."

It's also admirable how James usually makes the right call.

I agree with him that shaking hands after a game has nothing to do sportsmanship. He probably shouldn't say that being in the position he's in -- but he's not wrong. Shaking hands after a game at this level, to me, is for wimps. This is the NBA, not Pop Warner football.

So there are times when James' honesty is refreshing. But like Charles Barkley always did as a player, LeBron needs to pick his spots. And all contract talk should be off limits -- until 2010, when he either signs an extension in Cleveland, decides to go to New York, or opts to start a pro league in Guam (goodness knows, he's got the cash).

The reason James needs to squash this subject? Because no matter what athletes say, it can serve as a distraction. It can mess with your own mind, it can affect the psyches of teammates, it can even play a role in a coach's in-game decision.

I remember back in the 1980s, long before the Internet and when Pro Basketball News was published via chisel and granite. Not really, but close.

Anyway, Boston star Larry Bird seemingly loafed during the preseason, barely taking any shots and not putting up near the numbers we were used to seeing from him. Some said it was just the way Bird approached games that didn't mean anything. But others pointed out that Bird was waiting for a new contract -- and it affected his play and the play of everyone around him.

True or not, Bird signed a new deal and went back to being his usual self.

Now, I'm not saying that greats like Bird or James would ever allow something like that to happen. I'm just implying it could happen, whether LeBron wants it to or not. He has to know by now that whenever he talks about a contract, the national media suddenly stops covering basketball (in the rare instances they actually do) and suddenly starts acting like they are TMZ and LeBron is Britney Spears.

They want to turn 2009-10 into a circus, which it will already be considering James' team now also consists of Shaquille O'Neal, a large man with a larger personality.

Don't misunderstand. James hasn't done anything wrong. In my three years covering his team, I can't really remember a time that he has said anything outlandish or controversial.

But as his publicist, I have just one piece of advice when dealing with reporters: Take care not to throw these sharks even the smallest morsel of meat about your contract.

Let 'em starve.

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