When it comes to picking the new head coach for the Cleveland Cavaliers, owner Dan Gilbert and general manager Chris Grant know that it's mostly a crap shoot unless they're choosing among very known commodities. That means that if Phil Jackson and a precious few others aren't available, and they aren't, then whether or not they get the choice right will mostly be a matter of luck.

It's not a reflection on either Gilbert or Grant but a sobering assessment of the needle-in-a-haystack mysticism that is the finding of not just a coach who can win but of finding one that can take a team to the NBA title.

For the last several days, the Cavs have held vigil waiting for their target, Tom Izzo, to gather information and sort through the Tarot cards. What it came down to though was actually rather simple. Essentially, he said, without a guarantee that James would be back, the Cavs position was to much of a job to otherwise take on.

It was never certain that Izzo would have successfully made the transition to the NBA but I think Izzo made the right choice in staying in college. He's too much of a coward for the NBA game.

Reading and listening to Izzo explain why he didn't take the Cavs job, you get the sense that Izzo would only come to the NBA with the deck stacked in his favor. Maybe it's where he's at in

his career and maybe that's as it should be. It's how I'd want it, too. But without the cards stacked in his favor he was far more willing to survive on just $3 million a year instead of Gilbert's $6 million per package.

I suspect he's right when he says that he's at Michigan State for a lifetime. Owners and general managers across the league now understand that Izzo isn't up for the challenge of what the NBA brings. He's only interested in glory being mostly guaranteed.

I don't want to be too harsh on Izzo, though. He's 55 years old, a terrific college coach with a great track record at Michigan State. The college game is a grind, like any other job sometimes, but the ability to be around college aged kids, even ones with huge entitlement attitudes, can be far more invigorating for the soul than trying to deal with players like Delonte West all the time.

Still I am disappointed that Izzo, a good guy by all accounts, only wanted the Cavs job if there was a guarantee James would remain. That's a little disappointing. But Cavs fans should be happy to know that now before Izzo was 18 months into the job.

What the Cavs need, what the fans need, is a coach who is all in under any circumstances. Even when you have the game's best player on your roster, it isn't all peaches and beans as Archie Bunker used to say. If you look at this past season with 20/20 hindsight, you realize that in leading the Cavs to the league's best record former head coach Mike Brown had all manner of hassle to contend with in order to get them there.

There were all the problems with West, of course. But that was the tip of the iceberg. This team had to contend with its share of injuries. It also had to juggle some all-world egos both on the court and in the front office. Then, of course, was the endless loop of speculation and distraction that James' pending free agency became.

The Cavs weren't a team in turmoil this past season but neither were they a team sailing along blissfully either. The meltdown in the playoffs looks positively inevitable in retrospect.

I'm still not exactly sure what Brown did to get himself fired and I'm still not exactly sure why

Danny Ferry decided to call it a career, though it's easy to speculate and likely get most of it right. But all this did was further add to the confusion and yes, the stress, that a new head coach would inherit.

At 55, Izzo just decided he wasn't up to the task and, again, Cavs fans should be thankful.

The speculation now, of course, is that Izzo's decision doesn't bode well for James remaining in Cleveland, not because James wanted Izzo but more because James wasn't willing to help Izzo with his decision. Does that mean that Izzo secretly has some further insight about James' future than he's willing to share? Perhaps. Gilbert might as well. Even if neither does it's not hard to imagine that they are reading all of the obvious signals James is sending at the moment about his future and none of those are good for the locals.

I can understand why James doesn't want to get involved in the head coach search. That's not a place where any player really wants to be. What I understand far less, though, is why James would let this franchise dangle like this unless he really doesn't see himself re-signing. Check that, given all this franchise has done for him, I don't understand why James would let this franchise dangle like this under any circumstances.

You could go all conspiracy theorist on this and say that James wants this franchise to look a mess in order to have outsiders shake their heads in acknowledgement when he tries to justify why he left for [fill in the blank]. He wouldn't say that directly, certainly, but he'd do so by implication when explaining what an inviting and stable situation [fill in the blank] presents for James and his family.

You could also chalk all of this up to James just being an immature kid who, for all his worldliness, still doesn't quite appreciate the implication of his actions or, more accurately, his inactions.

Whatever it is, though, I'm rapidly coming around to the notion that James won't be with the Cavs next season. His lack of willingness to commit to Cleveland at this juncture is speaking volumes.

In a fashion, James really is like Izzo and had Izzo come to Cleveland he and James would have been a near perfect pair. They both see themselves having about another 8-10 years in their current roles and they both see themselves as having paid their dues. At this juncture, it's less about scaling the entire mountain and more about having a huge head start on the race to the top.

Izzo didn't see himself as wanting to grow up with a team and make a run a few years down the road and neither does James. If moves get made it will only be for titles and plenty of them.

I don't begrudge either James or Izzo and I doubt whether I'd act any differently if I were in either of their shoes. You don't get very many opportunities to legally rig the game in your favor and when those opportunities do come along you better jump on them quickly.

Izzo wasn't sure that opportunity existed in Cleveland and I'm starting to think that James isn't sure either. Where they diverge is the outcome. For Izzo, when the options in front of him were too risky, he opted to do nothing. For James, it's the do-nothing option that looks like it might be the riskiest.