AKRON, Ohio - Cavaliers forward and back-to-back NBA MVP LeBron James will sign a contract with the Miami Heat, and James, Dwyane Wade and Chris Bosh have known that for sometime, said a source close to the situation.

According to the source, the three stars had planned for thefree-agent drama to unfold exactly as it has -- with Bosh and Wade announcing their plans on Wednesday afternoon, and James following by making his own intentions known on a television program Thursday evening. Once the plans were finalized, LeBron's marketing team arranged for the show, which will be broadcast on ESPN tonight at 9.

The source added that Heat officials are holding a special party for season ticket-holders, in which they will watch James' TV announcement stating he will join the organization. Several news outlets are also reporting James has already rented spots for a party in Miami.

It is believed James became sold on the idea of joining the Heat after being told he will play point guard -- or as team president Pat Riley is believed to have explained, a role similar to that of Magic Johnson during Riley's time as coach of the Los Angeles Lakers in the1980s.

Riley also sold James on the idea that the Heat can flourish with three stars, using his Showtime Lakers teams of Johnson, James Worthy and Kareem Abdul-Jabbar as an example, the source indicated.

While Riley coached those Lakers teams, he is expected to remain in the front office with the Heat, and leave the coaching to Erik Spoelstra, according to the source.

Newsday first broke the news of James' intentions to leave his home region of Northeast Ohio for Miami, citing multiple sources. ESPN followed with a similar report shortly after.

Also, according to the ESPN and the Cleveland Plain Dealer, several people close to James are hoping he has a change of heart and re-signs with the Cavs, with whom he spent the first seven years of his career. However, according to the source, James believes his chances of winning multiple championships are better in Miami.

When an individual who is close to James was asked if James' signing with the Heat was definite, the individual responded, "No idea. None." The individual also confirmed that many close James, including this individual, were still holding out hope that James will remain in Cleveland.

Unconfirmed reports say the Cavs may be seeking a sign-and-trade to receive something in return for James, with speculation centering around Heat forward Michael Beasley.

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