

= LeBron James =

LeBron Raymonte James ( / l??br?n / ; born December 30 , 1984 ) is an American professional basketball player who is a free agent . James has won three NBA championships ( 2012 , 2013 , 2016 ) , four NBA Most Valuable Player Awards ( 2009 , 2010 , 2012 , 2013 ) , three NBA Finals MVP Awards ( 2012 , 2013 , 2016 ) , two Olympic gold medals ( 2008 , 2012 ) , an NBA scoring title ( 2008 ) , and the NBA Rookie of the Year Award ( 2004 ) . He has also been selected to 12 NBA All @-@ Star teams ( named the game 's MVP twice ) , 12 All @-@ NBA teams , and six All @-@ Defensive teams , and is the Cavaliers ' all @-@ time leading scorer .

James played high school basketball at St. Vincent ? St. Mary High School in his hometown of Akron , Ohio , where he was highly promoted in the national media as a future NBA superstar . After graduating , he was selected with the first overall pick in the 2003 NBA draft by the Cleveland Cavaliers . James led Cleveland to the franchise 's first Finals appearance in 2007 , losing to the San Antonio Spurs . In 2010 , he left the Cavaliers for the Miami Heat in a highly publicized ESPN special titled The Decision . James played four seasons for the Heat , reaching the Finals all four years and winning back @-@ to @-@ back championships in 2012 and 2013 . In 2013 , he led Miami on a 27 @-@ game winning streak , the third longest in league history . Following his final season with the Heat , James opted out of his contract and re @-@ joined the Cavaliers . Behind his leadership , Cleveland advanced to two consecutive Finals against the Golden State Warriors , winning the championship in 2016 .

Off the court , James has accumulated considerable wealth and fame from numerous endorsement deals . His public life has been the subject of much scrutiny , and he has been ranked as one of America 's most influential and popular athletes . He has been featured in books , documentaries , and television commercials . He also hosted the ESPY Awards , Saturday Night Live , and appeared in the 2015 film Trainwreck .

= = Early life = =

James was born on December 30 , 1984 in Akron , Ohio , to a 16 @-@ year @-@ old mother , Gloria Marie James , who raised him on her own . Growing up , life was often a struggle for the family , as they moved from apartment to apartment in the seedier neighborhoods of Akron while James ' mother struggled to find steady work . Realizing he would be better off with a more stable family environment , Gloria allowed James to move in with the family of Frank Walker , a local youth football coach , who introduced James to basketball when he was nine years old .

As a youth , James played Amateur Athletic Union ( AAU ) basketball for the Northeast Ohio Shooting Stars . The team enjoyed success on a local and national level , led by James and his friends Sian Cotton , Dru Joyce III , and Willie McGee . Inseparable , they dubbed themselves the " Fab Four " and promised each other they would attend high school together . In a move that stirred local controversy , they chose to attend St. Vincent ? St. Mary High School , a largely white private Catholic school .

= = High school career = =

= = = Basketball = = =

As a freshman , James averaged 21 points and 6 rebounds per game for St. Vincent @-@ St. Mary 's varsity team . The Fighting Irish finished the year 27 ? 0 , winning the Division III state title . As a sophomore , he averaged 25 @.@ 2 points and 7 @.@ 2 rebounds with 5 @.@ 8 assists and 3 @.@ 8 steals per game . For some home games during the season , St. Vincent @-@ St. Mary played at the University of Akron 's 5 @,@ 492 @-@ seat Rhodes Arena to satisfy ticket demand from alumni , fans , and college and NBA scouts who wanted to see James play . The Fighting Irish finished the season 26 ? 1 and repeated as state champions . For his outstanding play , James was

named Ohio 's Mr. Basketball and was selected to the USA Today All @-@ USA First Team , becoming the first sophomore to do either .

Prior to the start of James ' junior year , he appeared in SLAM Magazine and was lauded as possibly " the best high school basketball player in America right now . " During the season , he appeared on the cover of Sports Illustrated , becoming the first underclass high school basketball player to do so . With averages of 29 points , 8 @.@ 3 rebounds , 5 @.@ 7 assists , and 3 @.@ 3 steals per game , he was again named Ohio 's Mr. Basketball and selected to the USA Today All @-@ USA First Team , and became the first junior to win the boys ' basketball Gatorade National Player of the Year Award . St. Vincent @-@ St. Mary finished the year with a 23 ? 4 record , ending their season with a loss in the Division II championship game . Following the loss , James seriously considered declaring for the 2002 NBA draft , unsuccessfully petitioning for an adjustment to the NBA 's draft eligibility rules which required prospective players to have at least graduated from high school . During this time , James used marijuana to help cope with stress resulting from the constant media attention he was receiving .

During his senior year , James and the Fighting Irish traveled around the country to play a number of nationally ranked teams , including a game against Oak Hill Academy that was nationally televised on ESPN2 . Time Warner Cable , looking to capitalize on James ' popularity , offered St. Vincent @-@ St. Mary 's games to subscribers on a pay @-@ per @-@ view basis throughout the season . For the year , James averaged 31 @.@ 6 points , 9 @.@ 6 rebounds , 4 @.@ 6 assists , and 3 @.@ 4 steals per game , was named Ohio 's Mr. Basketball and USA Today All @-@ USA First Team for an unprecedented third consecutive year , and was named Gatorade National Player of the Year for the second consecutive year . He participated in three year @-@ end high school basketball all @-@ star games ? the EA Sports Roundball Classic , the Jordan Capital Classic , and the 2003 McDonald 's All @-@ American Game ? losing his NCAA eligibility and making it official he would enter the 2003 NBA draft . According to writer Ryan Jones , James left high school as " the most hyped basketball player ever " .

During his senior year , James was the centerpiece of several controversies . For his 18th birthday , he accepted a Hummer H2 from his mother , who secured a loan for the vehicle utilizing LeBron 's future earning power as a professional athlete . This prompted an investigation by the Ohio High School Athletic Association ( OHSAA ) as its guidelines state that no amateur may accept any gift valued over \$ 100 as a reward for athletic performance . Later in the season , James accepted two throwback jerseys worth \$ 845 from an urban clothing store in exchange for posing for pictures , officially violating OHSAA rules and resulting in his being stripped of his high school sports eligibility . James appealed the ruling and his penalty was eventually dropped to a two @-@ game suspension , allowing him to play the remainder of the year . The Irish were also forced to forfeit one of their wins , their only official loss that season . In his first game back after the suspension , James scored a career @-@ high 52 points .

= = = Football = = =

James played wide receiver for St. Vincent @-@ St. Mary 's football team in high school and was recruited by some Division I programs , including Notre Dame . As a sophomore , he was named first team all @-@ state , and as a junior , he led the Fighting Irish to the state semifinals . His football career came to an end before his senior year when he broke his wrist during an AAU basketball game . Many sports analysts , football critics , high school coaches , and former and current players have speculated on whether he could have played in the National Football League .

= = Professional career = =

= = = Cleveland Cavaliers ( 2003 ? 2010 ) = = =

===== Rookie season ( 2003 ? 04 ) =====

James was selected with the first overall pick in the 2003 NBA draft by the Cleveland Cavaliers . In his first professional game , he recorded 25 points against the Sacramento Kings , setting an NBA record for most points scored by a prep @-@ to @-@ pro player in his debut outing . He was eventually named the NBA Rookie of the Year , finishing with averages of 20 @.@ 9 points , 5 @.@ 5 rebounds , and 5 @.@ 9 assists per game . He became the first Cavalier to receive the honor and just the third player in NBA history to average at least 20 points , 5 rebounds , and 5 assists per game in his rookie year . The Cavaliers finished the season 35 ? 47 , failing to make the playoffs despite an 18 @-@ game improvement over the previous year .

===== Rise to superstardom ( 2004 ? 2008 ) =====

James earned his first NBA All @-@ Star Game selection in 2004 ? 05 , contributing 13 points , 8 rebounds , and 6 assists in a winning effort for the Eastern Conference . On March 20 , he scored 56 points against the Toronto Raptors , setting Cleveland 's new single game points record . With averages of 27 @.@ 2 points , 7 @.@ 4 rebounds , 7 @.@ 2 assists , and 2 @.@ 2 steals per game to finish the season , he was named to his first All @-@ NBA Team . Despite a 30 ? 20 record to start the year , the Cavaliers again failed to make the playoffs , finishing the season at 42 ? 40 .

At the 2006 All @-@ Star Game , James led the East to victory with 29 points and was named the NBA All @-@ Star Game Most Valuable Player . Behind final season averages of 31 @.@ 4 points , 7 rebounds , and 6 @.@ 6 assists per game , he finished second in NBA Most Valuable Player Award voting to Steve Nash . Under James ' leadership , the Cavaliers qualified for the playoffs for the first time since 1998 . In his postseason debut , he recorded a triple @-@ double in a winning effort versus the Washington Wizards . In Game 3 of the series , he made the first game @-@ winning shot of his career , making another in Game 5 . Cleveland would go on to defeat the Wizards before being ousted by the Detroit Pistons in the second round .

In 2006 ? 07 , James ' averages declined to 27 @.@ 3 points , 6 @.@ 7 rebounds , 6 assists , and 1 @.@ 6 steals per game . Some analysts attributed the fall to a regression in his passing skills and shot selection , stemming from a lack of effort and focus . The Cavaliers finished the season with 50 wins for the second consecutive year and entered the playoffs as the East 's second seed . In Game 5 of the Conference Finals , James notched 48 points with 9 rebounds and 7 assists , scoring 29 of Cleveland 's last 30 points , including the game @-@ winning lay @-@ up with two seconds left , against the Pistons . After the game , play @-@ by @-@ play announcer Marv Albert called the performance " one of the greatest moments in postseason history " and color commentator Steve Kerr called it " Jordan @-@ esque " . In 2012 , ESPN ranked the performance the fourth greatest in modern NBA playoff history . The Cavaliers went on to win Game 6 and claim their first ever Eastern Conference championship . They advanced to the NBA Finals where they were swept by the San Antonio Spurs . For the Finals , James averaged 22 points , 7 rebounds , and 6 @.@ 8 assists per game .

In February of the 2007 ? 08 season , James was named All @-@ Star Game MVP for the second time behind a 27 @-@ point , 8 @-@ rebound , and 9 @-@ assist performance . On March 21 , he moved past Brad Daugherty as the Cavaliers ' all @-@ time leading scorer in a game against the Raptors , doing so in over 100 less games than Daugherty . With seven triple @-@ doubles to finish the year , James set a new personal and team record for triple @-@ doubles in a season . His 30 points per game were also the highest in the league , representing his first scoring title . Despite his individual accomplishments , Cleveland 's record fell from the year before to 45 ? 37 . Seeded fourth in the East entering the playoffs , the Cavaliers defeated the Wizards in the first round for the third consecutive season before being eliminated in seven games by the Boston Celtics in the next round . During the decisive seventh game in Boston , James scored 45 points and Paul Pierce scored 41 in a game the Associated Press described as a " shootout " .

===== First MVP tenure ( 2008 ? 2010 ) =====

At the conclusion of the 2008 ? 09 season , James finished second in NBA Defensive Player of the Year voting and made his first NBA All @-@ Defensive Team with 23 chase @-@ down blocks and a career @-@ high 93 total blocks . He also became only the fourth postmerger player to lead his team in points , rebounds , assists , steals , and blocks in a single season . Behind his play , Cleveland went a franchise record 66 ? 16 and fell one game short of matching the best home record in league history . With averages of 28 @.@ 4 points , 7 @.@ 6 rebounds , 7 @.@ 2 assists , 1 @.@ 7 steals , and 1 @.@ 2 blocks per game , he became the first Cavalier to win the MVP Award .

In the playoffs , Cleveland swept the Pistons and the Atlanta Hawks to earn a match @-@ up with the Orlando Magic in the Conference Finals . In Game 1 of the series , James scored 49 points on 66 percent shooting in a losing effort for the Cavaliers . In Game 2 , he hit a game @-@ winner to tie the series at 1 ? 1 . Cleveland would lose the series in six games , and following the loss in Game 6 , James immediately left the floor without shaking hands with his opponents , an act many media members viewed as unsportsmanlike . For the series , he averaged 38 @.@ 5 points , 8 @.@ 3 rebounds , and 8 assists per game , finishing the postseason with a career playoff @-@ high 35 @.@ 3 points per game .

Midway through the 2009 ? 10 season , the Cavaliers ' guards experienced significant injuries , forcing James into a temporary point guard role . With increased minutes as the team 's primary ball handler , he averaged a career @-@ high 8 @.@ 6 assists with 29 @.@ 7 points , 7 @.@ 3 rebounds , 1 @.@ 6 steals , and 1 block per game on 50 percent shooting en route to a second consecutive MVP Award . Cleveland also finished the season with the league 's best record for the second straight year . In the playoffs , the Cavaliers beat the Bulls in the first round but fell to the Celtics in the second round . James was heavily criticized for not playing well in Game 5 of the series when he shot only 20 percent on 14 shots , scoring 15 points . At the conclusion of the game , he walked off the court to a smattering of boos from Cleveland 's home crowd , the team having just suffered their worst home playoff loss ever . The Cavaliers were eliminated from the playoffs by the Celtics with a Game 6 defeat despite James recording 27 points , 19 rebounds and 10 assists .

= = = 2010 free agency = = =

James became an unrestricted free agent at 12 : 01 am EDT on July 1 , 2010 . During his free agency , he was courted by several teams , including the Bulls , Los Angeles Clippers , Miami Heat , New York Knicks , New Jersey Nets , and Cavaliers . On July 8 , he announced on a live ESPN special titled The Decision that he would sign with the Heat . The telecast , broadcast from the Boys & Girls Club of Greenwich , Connecticut , raised \$ 2 @.@ 5 million for the charity and an additional \$ 3 @.@ 5 million from advertisement revenue that was donated to other charities . The day before the special , fellow free agents Chris Bosh and Dwyane Wade had also announced that they would sign with Miami ; reports later arose that the trio had discussed their 2010 free agencies together in 2006 . James decided to join with Bosh and Wade in part so that he could shoulder less of the load offensively , thinking that his improved teammates would give him a better chance of winning a championship than had he stayed in Cleveland . Heat president Pat Riley played a major role in selling James on the idea of playing with Bosh and Wade . Relieved of the burden of scoring , James thought he could be the first player to average a triple @-@ double in a season since Oscar Robertson .

James drew immense criticism from sports analysts , executives , fans , and current and former players for leaving the Cavaliers . The Decision itself was also scrutinized and viewed as unnecessary . Many thought the prolonged wait for James ' choice was unprofessional as not even the teams courting him were aware of his decision until moments before the show . Upon learning that James would not be returning to Cleveland , Cavaliers owner Dan Gilbert published an open letter to fans in which he aggressively denounced James ' actions . Some angry fans of the team recorded videos of themselves burning his jersey . Former NBA players including Michael Jordan and Magic Johnson were also critical of James , condemning him for joining with Bosh and Wade in

Miami and not trying to win a championship as " the guy " . James drew further criticism in a September interview with CNN when he claimed that race might have been a factor in the fallout from The Decision . As a result of his actions during the 2010 free agency period , he quickly gained a reputation as one of America 's most disliked athletes , a radical change from years prior . The phrase " taking my talents to South Beach " became a punch line for critics .

Immediately following The Decision , James claimed that there was nothing he would change about the handling of his free agency despite all the criticism . Since then , he has expressed regret over his actions . During the 2010 ? 11 season , he said he " probably would do it a little bit different ... But I 'm happy with my decision . " James relented about the special before the 2011 ? 12 season : " ... if the shoe was on the other foot and I was a fan , and I was very passionate about one player , and he decided to leave , I would be upset too about the way he handled it . "

= = = Miami Heat ( 2010 ? 2014 ) = = =

= = = Debut season ( 2010 ? 11 ) = = =

James officially became a member of the Heat on July 10 , completing a sign @-@ and @-@ trade six @-@ year contract with the team . With the move , he became only the third reigning MVP to change teams and the first since Moses Malone in 1982 . Although his contract would have allowed him to earn the maximum salary under the collective bargaining agreement , he took less money in order for Miami to be able to afford Bosh and Wade as well as further roster support . That evening , the Heat threw a welcome party for their new " big three " at the American Airlines Arena , an event that took on a rock concert atmosphere . During the gathering , James predicted a dynasty for the Heat and alluded to multiple championships . Outside of Miami , the spectacle was not well @-@ received , furthering the negative public perception of James .

Throughout the 2010 ? 11 season , James embraced the villain role bestowed upon him by the media ; he later admitted that he regretted this approach . On December 2 , he returned to Cleveland for the first time since departing as a free agent , scoring 38 points and leading Miami to a win while being booed every time he touched the ball . He finished the season with averages of 26 @.@ 7 points , 7 @.@ 5 rebounds , and 7 assists per game on 51 percent shooting . Entering the playoffs as the East 's second seed , Miami advanced to the Finals before stumbling against the Dallas Mavericks , losing in six games despite holding a 2 ? 1 series lead going into Game 4 . James received the brunt of the criticism for the loss , averaging only three points in fourth quarters in the series . His Finals scoring average of 17 @.@ 8 points per game signified an 8 @.@ 9 @-@ point drop from the regular season , the largest point drop @-@ off in league history .

= = = Back @-@ to @-@ back championships ( 2011 ? 13 ) = = =

Humbled by the Heat 's loss to the Mavericks , James spent the offseason working with Hakeem Olajuwon on his post game . His work with Olajuwon paid off , fueling what Grantland 's Kirk Goldsberry called " one of the greatest and most important transformations in recent sports history " . Behind James ' more post @-@ oriented play , Miami matched their best start to a season in franchise history , and at the conclusion of the lockout @-@ shortened 2011 ? 12 campaign , he was named MVP for the third time , finishing with averages of 27 @.@ 1 points , 7 @.@ 9 rebounds , 6 @.@ 2 assists , and 1 @.@ 9 steals per game on 53 percent shooting .

In Game 4 of the second round of the playoffs , James registered 40 points , 18 rebounds , and 9 assists to help even the series against the Indiana Pacers . Miami eventually defeated the Pacers in six games . Facing elimination in Game 6 of the Conference Finals against the Celtics , James scored 45 points to lead the Heat to victory in what the New York Times called a " career @-@ defining performance " . Miami won Game 7 to advance to the Finals , earning them a matchup with the Oklahoma City Thunder . Late in Game 4 of the series , James hit a three @-@ pointer to give the Heat a lead , helping them win the game despite missing time with leg cramps . In Game 5 , he

registered a triple @-@ double as Miami defeated Oklahoma City for their second @-@ ever championship and James ' first championship . James was unanimously voted the Bill Russell NBA Finals Most Valuable Player with averages of 28 @.@ 6 points , 10 @.@ 2 rebounds , and 7 @.@ 4 assists per game .

In February of the 2012 ? 13 season , James had , as described by Sports Illustrated , a " month for the ages " , averaging 29 @.@ 7 points and 7 @.@ 8 assists per game while setting multiple shooting efficiency records . During this period , the Heat began a 27 @-@ game winning streak , the third longest in NBA history . Behind his play , Miami finished the year with a franchise and league best 66 ? 16 record , and James was named MVP for the fourth time , falling just one vote shy of becoming the first player in NBA history to win the award unanimously . His final season averages were 26 @.@ 8 points , 8 rebounds , 7 @.@ 3 assists , and 1 @.@ 7 steals per game on 56 @.@ 5 percent shooting .

In Game 1 of the Conference Finals , James scored a buzzer @-@ beating layup to give Miami a one @-@ point victory against the Pacers . Throughout the series , his supporting cast struggled significantly , and his added scoring load prompted him to compare his responsibilities to those of his " Cleveland days " . Despite these struggles , the Heat won the series and advanced to the Finals for a meeting with the Spurs , signifying a rematch for James from his first Finals six years earlier . At the beginning of the series , he was criticized for his lack of aggressiveness and poor shot selection as Miami fell behind 2 ? 3 . In Game 6 , he recorded his second triple @-@ double of the series including 16 fourth quarter points to lead the Heat to a comeback victory . In Game 7 , he tied the Finals record for most points scored in a Game 7 victory , leading Miami over San Antonio with 37 points . He was named Finals MVP for the second straight season , averaging 25 @.@ 3 points , 10 @.@ 9 rebounds , 7 assists , and 2 @.@ 3 steals per game for the series .

= = = Fourth consecutive Finals ( 2013 ? 14 ) = = =

On March 3 of the 2013 ? 14 season , James scored a career @-@ high and franchise record 61 points in a game against the Charlotte Bobcats . Throughout the year , he was one of the few staples for a Heat roster that used 20 different starting line @-@ ups because of injuries , finishing with averages of 27 @.@ 1 points , 6 @.@ 9 rebounds , and 6 @.@ 4 assists per game on 56 @.@ 7 percent shooting . In the second round of the playoffs , he tied a career postseason @-@ high by scoring 49 points in Game 4 against the Brooklyn Nets . In the next round , Miami defeated the Pacers to earn their fourth consecutive Finals berth , becoming one of only four teams in NBA history to do so . In Game 1 of the Finals , James missed most of the fourth quarter because of leg cramps , helping the Spurs take an early series lead . In Game 2 , he led the Heat to a series @-@ tying victory with 35 points on a 64 percent shooting rate . San Antonio eventually eliminated the Heat in five games , ending Miami 's quest for a three @-@ peat . For the Finals , James averaged 28 @.@ 2 points , 7 @.@ 8 rebounds , and 2 steals per game .

= = = Return to the Cavaliers ( 2014 ? 2016 ) = = =

On June 25 , James opted out of his contract with the Heat , officially becoming an unrestricted free agent on July 1 . On July 11 , he revealed via a first @-@ person essay in Sports Illustrated that he intended to rejoin the Cavaliers . In contrast to The Decision , his announcement to return to Cleveland was well received . On July 12 , he officially signed with the team . A month after James ' signing , the Cavaliers acquired Kevin Love from the Minnesota Timberwolves , forming a new star trio along with Kyrie Irving .

In January of the 2014 ? 15 season , James missed two weeks due to left knee and lower back strains , the longest stretch of missed games in his career . In total , he played a career @-@ low 69 games and his final averages were 25 @.@ 3 points , 6 rebounds , and 7 @.@ 4 assists per game . In the second round of the playoffs , he hit a baseline jumper at the buzzer to give Cleveland a 2 ? 2 series tie with the Bulls . In the Conference Finals , the Cavaliers defeated the Hawks to advance to the Finals , making James the first player since the 1960s to play in five consecutive Finals . For

most of the Finals against the Golden State Warriors , Irving and Love were sidelined due to injury , giving James more offensive responsibilities . Behind his leadership , the Cavaliers opened the series with a 2 ? 1 lead before being eliminated in six games . Despite the loss , he received serious consideration for the Finals MVP Award , averaging 35 @.@ 8 points , 13 @.@ 3 rebounds , and 8 @.@ 8 assists per game for the series .

During the 2015 ? 16 season , James was criticized for his role in several off court controversies , including the midseason firing of Cavaliers ' head coach David Blatt . Despite these distractions , Cleveland finished the year with 57 wins and the best record in the East . James ' final averages were 25 @.@ 3 points , 7 @.@ 4 rebounds , and 6 @.@ 8 assists per game on 52 percent shooting . In the playoffs , the Cavaliers advanced comfortably to the Finals , losing only two games en route to a rematch with the Warriors , who were coming off a record @-@ setting 73 win campaign . To begin the series , Cleveland fell behind 3 ? 1 , including two blowout losses . James responded by registering back @-@ to @-@ back 41 point games in Games 5 and 6 , leading the Cavaliers to two consecutive wins to stave off elimination . In Game 7 , he posted a triple @-@ double and made a number of key plays , including a memorable chase @-@ down block on Andre Iguodala in the final two minutes , as Cleveland emerged victorious , winning the city 's first professional sports title in 52 years and becoming the first team in NBA history to come back from a 3 ? 1 series deficit in the Finals . James became just the third player to record a triple @-@ double in an NBA Finals Game 7 , and behind series averages of 29 @.@ 7 points , 11 @.@ 3 rebounds , 8 @.@ 9 assists , 2 @.@ 3 blocks , and 2 @.@ 6 steals per game , he also became the first player in league history to lead both teams in all five statistical categories for a playoff round , culminating in a unanimous Finals MVP selection .

= = National team career = =

James made his debut for the United States national team at the 2004 Olympics in Athens , Greece . He spent the Games mostly on the bench , averaging 14 @.@ 6 minutes per game with 5 @.@ 8 points and 2 @.@ 6 rebounds per game in eight games . Team USA finished the competition with a bronze medal , becoming the first U.S. basketball team to return home without a gold medal since adding professionals to their line @-@ up . James felt his limited playing time was a " lowlight " and believed he was not given " a fair opportunity to play " . His attitude during the Olympics was described as " disrespectful " and " distasteful " by columnists Adrian Wojnarowski and Peter Vecsey , respectively .

At the 2006 FIBA World Championship in Japan , James took on a greater role for Team USA , averaging 13 @.@ 9 points , 4 @.@ 8 rebounds , and 4 @.@ 1 assists per game as co @-@ captain . The team finished the tournament with an 8 ? 1 record , winning another bronze medal . James ' behavior was again questioned , this time by teammate Bruce Bowen , who confronted James during tryouts regarding his treatment of staff members .

Before naming James to the 2008 Olympic team , Team USA managing director Jerry Colangelo and coach Mike Krzyzewski gave James an ultimatum to improve his attitude , and he heeded their advice . At the FIBA Americas Championship 2007 , he averaged 18 @.@ 1 points , 3 @.@ 6 rebounds , and 4 @.@ 7 assists per game , including a 31 @-@ point performance against Argentina in the championship game , the most ever by an American in an Olympic qualifier . Team USA went 10 ? 0 , winning the gold medal and qualifying for the 2008 Olympics in Beijing , China . James credited the team 's attitude and experience for their improvement , saying : " I don 't think we understood what it meant to put on a USA uniform and all the people that we were representing in 2004 . We definitely know that now . " At the Olympics , Team USA went unbeaten , winning their first gold medal since 2000 . In the final game , James turned in 14 points , 6 rebounds , and 3 assists against Spain .

James did not play at the 2010 FIBA World Championship but rejoined Team USA for the 2012 Olympics in London , England . He became the leader of the team with Kobe Bryant , who would soon be 34 , stepping back . James facilitated the offense from the post and perimeter , called the defensive sets , and provided scoring when needed . During a game against Australia , he recorded

the first triple @-@ double in U.S. Olympic basketball history with 11 points , 14 rebounds and 12 assists . Team USA went on to win their second straight gold medal , again defeating Spain in the final game . James contributed 19 points in the win , becoming the all @-@ time leading scorer in U.S. men 's basketball history . He also joined Michael Jordan as the only players to win an NBA MVP award , NBA championship , NBA Finals MVP , and Olympic gold medal in the same year . Afterwards , Krzyzewski said James " is the best player , he is the best leader and he is as smart as anybody playing the game right now . "

= = Player profile = =

Standing at 6 feet 8 inches ( 2 @. @ 03 m ) and weighing 250 pounds ( 113 @. @ 4 kg ) , James has started at small forward and power forward , but can also play the other three positions . With career averages of 27 @. @ 5 points , 7 @. @ 2 rebounds , 6 @. @ 9 assists , and 1 @. @ 7 steals per game , he is considered one of the most athletic and versatile players in NBA history , and has been compared to Hall of Famers Oscar Robertson , Magic Johnson , and Michael Jordan . Since 2011 , he has been ranked the best player in the NBA by ESPN and Sports Illustrated .

Many basketball analysts , coaches , fans , and current and former players consider James to be one of the greatest players of all @-@ time , often ranking him as the best small forward and in the top five overall . He has earned All @-@ NBA honors every season since his sophomore year , All @-@ Defensive honors every season from 2009 to 2014 , and was named Rookie of the Year in his debut season . With four MVP awards , he is part of a select group of players who have won the award four times , including Kareem Abdul @-@ Jabbar , Jordan , Wilt Chamberlain , and Bill Russell ; only he and Russell have won four MVP awards in a five @-@ year span . While James has never won the Defensive Player of the Year Award , he has finished second in the voting twice and lists it as one of his main goals .

= = = Offense = = =

James entered the NBA at an early age and made an immediate offensive impact ; he holds numerous " youngest to " distinctions including being the youngest player to score 25 @, @ 000 career points . During his first term with the Cavaliers , he was used as an on @-@ ball point forward , and although his shooting tendencies were perimeter @-@ oriented , he established himself as one of the best slashers and finishers in basketball , leading the NBA in three point plays in 2006 . Around this time , he was frequently criticized for not having developed a reliable jump shot or post game , areas he improved in Miami , where Heat coach Erik Spoelstra changed James ' role to a more unconventional one . James began spending more time in the post and shooting fewer three @-@ pointers , attempting a career @-@ low 149 in 2012 . He improved his shot selection and accuracy on jump shots , finishing second in the league in catch @-@ and @-@ shoot field goal percentage in 2013 . He also learned how to work as an off @-@ ball cutter in the Heat 's " pass @-@ happy " offense . During this period , ESPN 's Tom Haberstroh has called James ' free throw shooting his biggest weakness , describing it as " average " . Upon returning to the Cavaliers , James began to experience subtle age @-@ related declines in productivity , posting his lowest scoring averages since his rookie season in 2015 and 2016 . His shooting also regressed , and he briefly ranked as the worst high @-@ volume outside shooter from outside the paint in the NBA .

Throughout his career , James ' playmaking ability has been praised ; in one article , Grantland 's Zach Lowe called him " one of the greatest passers ever " . Using his size , vision , and the attention he garners from opposing defenses to his advantage , James is able to create easy points for his teammates with accurate assists , manufacturing a league leading 2 @. @ 6 three @-@ pointers per game by way of his passing alone in 2013 .

Early in James ' career , he was criticized by the media for his play in pressure situations ; specifically , for passing instead of shooting in the waning seconds of close games . In a 2011 interview , teammate Chris Bosh stated that he would rather have Dwyane Wade take a last @-@ second shot than James . Later in James ' career , his clutch play was viewed more favorably ; for



example , a 2011 article by Henry Abbott revealed that James had a better shooting percentage with the game on the line than such notables as Ray Allen and Kobe Bryant . In 2015 , FiveThirtyEight wrote that he might be " the most clutch playoff shooter of his generation " .

== Defense ==

At the beginning of James ' career , he was considered a poor defensive player , but improved steadily through the years . Near the end of his first tenure in Cleveland , he became proficient at the chase @-@ down block ; coming in from behind the opposition in transition to block their shot . In Miami , he developed into a more versatile defender , and the Heat relied on him to guard all five positions . Paired with teammates Shane Battier and Dwyane Wade , Miami used James in an ultra @-@ aggressive defensive scheme , with James cheating off the ball to help out inside or get into rebounding position . In 2014 , James was criticized for having a down defensive season , stemming from a lack of effort and a tendency for " coasting " .

== Off the court ==

James proposed to Savannah Brinson , his high school sweetheart , on December 31 , 2011 at a party celebrating New Year 's Eve and his 27th birthday . The two were married on September 14 , 2013 in San Diego . Together , they have three children : LeBron James Jr . ( born October 6 , 2004 ) , Bryce Maximus James ( born June 14 , 2007 ) , and Zhuri James . During his tenure with the Heat , James resided in Coconut Grove , an affluent Miami neighborhood , where he bought a three @-@ story mansion overlooking Biscayne Bay for \$ 9 million . In November 2015 , James bought a 9 @, @ 350 square @-@ feet East Coast @-@ style mansion in Brentwood , Los Angeles , for about \$ 21 million .

== Business interests ==

James is represented by agent Rich Paul of Klutch Sports . His first agent was Aaron Goodwin , whom he left in 2005 for Leon Rose . Rose joined Creative Artists Agency ( CAA ) in 2007 , and he worked with fellow CAA agent Henry Thomas , who represented Dwyane Wade and Chris Bosh , to bring James to Miami in 2010 . James left CAA for Paul in 2012 . James , Paul , Maverick Carter , and Randy Mims ? all childhood friends ? formed agent and sports @-@ marketing company LRMR after James left Goodwin . LRMR handles James ' marketing , including the marketing of The Decision , for which it was criticized .

Throughout his career , James has taken a unique approach to his playing contracts , usually opting to sign shorter term deals in order to maximize his earnings potential and flexibility . In 2006 , he and the Cavaliers negotiated a three @-@ year , \$ 60 million contract extension instead of the four year maximum as it allotted James the option of seeking a new contract worth more money as an unrestricted free agent following the 2010 season . In 2014 , he rejoined Cleveland on a two @-@ year contract worth \$ 42 @. @ 1 million with an option to become a free agent again in 2015 . The next offseason , he opted out of the contract and re @-@ signed with the Cavaliers on another two @-@ year contract with a player option for the second year . Analysts have speculated that James is opting out and re @-@ signing on new contracts after each season in order to take advantage of higher salaries resulting from the NBA 's rising salary cap .

James has numerous endorsement contracts ; some of the companies he does business with are Audemars Piguet , Coca @-@ Cola , Dunkin ' Brands , McDonald 's , Nike , State Farm , and Samsung . Coming out of high school , he was the target of a three @-@ way bidding war among Nike , Reebok , and Adidas , eventually signing with Nike for approximately \$ 90 million . His signature shoes have performed well for Nike , and in 2013 he led all NBA players in shoe sales . In 2011 , Fenway Sports Group became the sole global marketer of his rights , and as part of the deal , he was granted a minority stake in the English Premier League football club Liverpool FC , who he has claimed his support for . As a result of James ' endorsement money and NBA salary , he has

been listed as one of the world 's highest @-@ paid athletes . In 2013 , he surpassed Kobe Bryant as the highest paid basketball player in the world with earnings of \$ 56 @.@ 5 million . In 2015 he was ranked the sixth highest earning sportsperson , and third highest in 2016 ( after Cristiano Ronaldo and Lionel Messi ) . In 2014 , James realized a profit of more than \$ 30 million as part of Apple 's acquisition of Beats Electronics ; he had originally struck a deal to get a small stake in the company at its inception in exchange for promoting its headphones .

James , with comedian Jimmy Kimmel , co @-@ hosted the 2007 ESPY Awards . In other comedic pursuits , he hosted the 33rd season premiere of Saturday Night Live . He has also tried his hand at acting , appearing in a cameo role on the HBO series Entourage . In 2015 , he played himself in the Judd Apatow film Trainwreck , receiving positive reviews for his performance . That same year , James ' digital video company , Uninterrupted , raised \$ 15 @.@ 8 million from Warner Bros. Entertainment and Turner Sports to help expand the company 's efforts to bring athlete @-@ created content to fans . It is hosted on Bleacher Report and is used by several other athletes including New England Patriots tight end Rob Gronkowski and Seattle Seahawks cornerback Richard Sherman .

Along with business partner Maverick Carter , James owns production company SpringHill Entertainment , whose first work was the Lions Gate documentary More Than a Game , released in 2009 and chronicling James ' high school years . Series produced by SpringHill include the Disney XD sports documentaries Becoming , Starz sitcom Survivor 's Remorse , and animated web series The LeBrons . In 2016 , CNBC will air an unscripted series hosted by James called Cleveland Hustles , where four up @-@ and @-@ coming Northern Ohio entrepreneurs will be financed on the condition of revitalizing a neighborhood in Cleveland .

= = = Public image = = =

James is considered by many , including his fellow players , to be the " face of the NBA " . His opinions have yielded significant influence on important league decisions ; for example , in 2014 he asked commissioner Adam Silver to increase the duration of the All @-@ Star break , and the request was granted the following season . On February 13 , 2015 , James was elected the first Vice President of the National Basketball Players Association ( NBPA ) .

James has been ranked by Forbes as one of the world 's most influential athletes throughout his career . During his first tenure with the Cavaliers , he was adored by local fans , with Sherwin @-@ Williams displaying a giant Nike @-@ produced banner of James on its world headquarters . Despite their affection for James , Cleveland fans and critics were frequently annoyed when he attended Cleveland Indians games against the New York Yankees dressed in a Yankees hat . Following his actions during the 2010 free agency period and , more specifically , The Decision , he was listed as one of the world 's most disliked athletes . By 2013 , his image had mostly recovered and he was reported by ESPN as the most popular player in the NBA for the second time in his career . In 2014 , he was named the most popular male athlete in America by the Harris Poll . He has led the league in jersey sales six times .

A philanthropist , James is an active supporter of the Boys & Girls Club of America , Children 's Defense Fund , and ONEXONE . He also has his own charity foundation , the LeBron James Family Foundation , which is based out of Akron . Since 2005 , the foundation has held an annual bike @-@ a @-@ thon in Akron to raise money for various causes . In 2015 , James announced a partnership with the University of Akron to provide scholarships for as many as 2 @,@ 300 children beginning in 2021 .

In March 2008 , James became the first black man ? and third man overall after Richard Gere and George Clooney ? to appear on the cover of Vogue , posing with Gisele Bündchen . Some sports bloggers and columnists considered the cover offensive , describing the demeanor of James and his holding Bündchen as a reference to classic imagery of the movie monster King Kong , a dark savage capturing his light @-@ skinned love interest .

James has taken stances on controversial issues throughout his career , mentioning on several occasions a feeling of obligation to effect change using his status . Those include the War in Darfur ,

the Trayvon Martin case , NBA owner Donald Sterling 's racist comments in 2014 , the Michael Brown verdict , and the death of Eric Garner . In June 2008 , James donated \$ 20 @,@ 000 to a committee to elect Barack Obama . Later that year , James gathered almost 20 @,@ 000 people at the Quicken Loans Arena for a viewing of Democratic presidential nominee Barack Obama 's 30 @-@ minute American Stories , American Solutions television advertisement . It was shown on a large screen above the stage , where Jay @-@ Z later held a free concert .

= = NBA career statistics = =

= = = Regular season = = =

= = = Playoffs = = =

= = Awards and honors = =

NBA

Three @-@ time NBA Champion : 2012 , 2013 , 2016

Three @-@ time NBA Finals MVP : 2012 , 2013 , 2016

Four @-@ time NBA Most Valuable Player : 2009 , 2010 , 2012 , 2013

12 @-@ time NBA All @-@ Star : 2005 , 2006 , 2007 , 2008 , 2009 , 2010 , 2011 , 2012 , 2013 , 2014 , 2015 , 2016

Two @-@ time NBA All @-@ Star Game MVP : 2006 , 2008

Ten @-@ time All @-@ NBA First Team : 2006 , 2008 , 2009 , 2010 , 2011 , 2012 , 2013 , 2014 , 2015 , 2016

Two @-@ time All @-@ NBA Second Team : 2005 , 2007

Five @-@ time NBA All @-@ Defensive First Team : 2009 , 2010 , 2011 , 2012 , 2013

NBA All @-@ Defensive Second Team : 2014

2004 NBA Rookie of the Year

2004 NBA All @-@ Rookie First Team

2008 NBA Scoring Champion

Only player since Oscar Robertson to be in the top 20 for all @-@ time points and assists leaders .  
National team

Two @-@ time Olympic Gold Medal winner : 2008 , 2012

2004 Olympic Bronze Medal winner

2006 FIBA World Championship Bronze Medal winner

2007 FIBA Americas Championship Gold Medal winner

2012 USA Basketball Male Athlete of the Year

Commemorative banner in Miami 's American Airlines Arena ( for his 2012 gold medal won as a member of the Miami Heat )

High school

2003 National Champion

Three @-@ time OHSA Champion : 2000 , 2001 , 2003

Two @-@ time Gatorade National Player of the Year 2002 , 2003

Two @-@ time USA Today High School Player of the Year 2002 , 2003

Three @-@ time Ohio Mr. Basketball : 2001 , 2002 , 2003

Three @-@ time USA Today All @-@ USA First Team : 2001 , 2002 , 2003

Two @-@ time PARADE High School Player of the Year : 2002 , 2003

2003 Naismith Prep Player of the Year

2003 McDonald 's National Player of the Year

2003 McDonald 's High School All @-@ American

2003 McDonald 's All @-@ American Game 2003

2003 EA Sports Roundball Classic MVP

2003 Jordan Capital Classic MVP

Number 23 retired by St. Vincent @-@ St. Mary

St. Vincent @-@ St. Mary Hall of Fame ( class of 2011 )

St. Vincent @-@ St. Mary home basketball court named The LeBron James Arena

Other

Two @-@ time Cleveland Sports Awards Professional Athlete of the Year : 2009 , 2016

2013 AP Athlete of the Year

2012 Sports Illustrated Sportsman of the Year

2012 Sporting News Athlete of the Year

2006 Sporting News NBA MVP

2004 Sporting News Rookie of the Year

Sports Illustrated NBA All @-@ Decade First Team ( 2000s )

16 @-@ time ESPY Award winner in various categories ( 12 individually , four as part of a team )

South Main Street in downtown Akron renamed King James Way

10 @-@ story commemorative banner in downtown Cleveland

Six @-@ story commemorative banner in downtown Akron