

10-9-2006 NCAA, NBA,& Youth Basketball

1 (File: 20061009)

2 JOSH CENTOR: I'm here with NCAA president Myles
3 Brand. And we're getting ready to talk some hoops. It's
4 getting up on basketball season, aren't we?

5 DR. MYLES BRAND: We are getting close.

6 JOSH CENTOR: Well, some of the news that's been
7 coming out now -- obviously we don't have games -- but you've
8 been working with NBA Commissioner David Stern and some others
9 talking about some issues in basketball. Frankly, I don't
10 know too much of what's going on, and I do want to know.

11 DR. MYLES BRAND: You know, there's a real problem in
12 youth basketball or precollegiate basketball. Without trying
13 to go into a lot of the details, it's a chaotic situation in
14 which we have third party, sometimes entrepreneurs who are
15 leading summer teams and even sometimes during the year,
16 special traveling teams, attracting some of the young men --
17 it's mostly a male activity. And they're disconnecting it
18 from high school and even to some extent disconnecting it from
19 college and the NBA.

20 Now, neither the NBA nor the NCAA has any direct core
21 mission in precollegiate sports, but the nature of basketball
22 is such that we felt working together we might be able to find
23 a way to improve the whole.

24 JOSH CENTOR: Now, is it all about your performance on
25 the court? I know from the NCAA perspective, obviously we're

1 committed to education. Now, the NBA, it's a professional
2 basketball organization. Are they committed to education?

3 DR. MYLES BRAND: Yes. It's all about values, and the
4 NBA and the NCAA share values in that -- not just the
5 development as a player, but also the social and economic
6 development and the educational development of young students
7 and professionals, as well, is a matter of concern. We want
8 to make sure that as people come through playing organized
9 basketball, that the values of education, the values of social
10 responsibility, are part of what's being taught in the game.
11 And here it goes beyond the court, and there's clear agreement
12 between the NBA and the NCAA.

13 And I should say clear agreement with others who are
14 just parties to this second summit, and that includes the shoe
15 companies.

16 JOSH CENTOR: Yeah. I was going to ask you. Who are
17 some of the others that are involved with these conversations?

18 DR. MYLES BRAND: Right.

19 JOSH CENTOR: The shoe companies? I mean, why are
20 they there? Who else is there?

21 DR. MYLES BRAND: Well, Nike, and as you know
22 Adidas-Reebok now have joined forces. Those two major shoe
23 companies have the same values. It's a value-driven
24 enterprise.

25 Also at the table was the AAU, the National Federation

1 For High Schools; the NABC which is the National Association
2 of male Basketball Coaches in college; a number of coaches --
3 some legends of the game, if you like; as well as
4 representatives from professional leagues and the college
5 leagues through the NCAA. So it was a very broad-based group
6 of people all looking to find a way to improve the
7 precollegiate experience for players.

8 JOSH CENTOR: And how often are you all meeting? I
9 mean, what is the timeline? Desired goals down the road?
10 What are we looking at?

11 DR. MYLES BRAND: Well, first of all, this was a
12 groundbreaking set of meetings. We met for the first time in
13 Chicago about a year ago. And this is the second meeting.
14 We've agreed to have a small working group to see what's the
15 next step and to develop a plan.

16 Our hope, frankly, is within a short period of time,
17 say a year, have a plan that we want to put in effect that
18 will assist in providing those educational and social
19 experiences for precollegiate basketball players.

20 JOSH CENTOR: Is it just basketball? Obviously,
21 basketball is one of our four major professional sports. Any
22 plans to start any of these committees with football or Major
23 League Baseball? Or is it just basketball? Is that a unique
24 situation with youth basketball?

25 DR. MYLES BRAND: You know, if you count the number of

1 people who participate in a sport in America today, basketball
2 is the most popular sport. But yet basketball differs from
3 every other sport, including football and baseball, in that it
4 doesn't have an organized national approach.

5 USA Basketball was at the table too, but that group is
6 only focused at the present time on our international play,
7 preparing teams for the Olympics or the FIBA, the world games
8 that we just saw. And that's their only focus.

9 So there is no organized national effort in
10 basketball, even though it's the most popular sport. And in
11 that regard, it differs from other sports. So there is a
12 special issue here.

13 JOSH CENTOR: So we're looking at making some changes
14 or having an impact on youth basketball so that when these
15 kids get older, they're already well versed in what they
16 should be well versed in?

17 DR. MYLES BRAND: Well, one thing about American
18 sports in particular is we've connected it to education. We
19 differ from every other country in the world in this regard,
20 both in Europe and in Asia. But we've closely aligned
21 athletic participation in an organized way with education.

22 And so if we can bring that point of view overall back
23 to youth basketball, then when youngsters, young men, go to
24 high school and then on to college or the professional
25 leagues, they will have an education and socialization built

1 into it that's not now guaranteed in the way in which
2 basketball is being run.

3 JOSH CENTOR: Okay. Well, thank you for informing me
4 about these conversations. I find it fascinating. I'm glad
5 to know about it.

6 In just about a month or so, the NIT Season Tip-Off
7 will call the college basketball season to order, and I'm
8 ready for it. As you may recall, the NIT Season Tip-Off, as a
9 native New Yorker, is one of my favorite, favorite events of
10 the season.

11 So stay tuned to "Mondays With Myles", as we take you
12 right through the winter action. We'll see you next week.

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