

2-20-2006 Mondays with Myles-NCAA Centennial

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2 JOSH: This is Josh (indiscernible). And  
3 welcome to the Double A. Today I'll be visiting with  
4 Dr. Myles Brand, president of the NCAA.

5 Dr. Brand, thanks for joining me.

6 DR. MYLES BRAND: Pleasure.

7 JOSH: The NCAA has recently kicked off its  
8 centennial celebration. What do people need to know about  
9 it?

10 DR. MYLES BRAND: A hundred years is a long  
11 time. You know, in this day and age, when things happen  
12 so quickly and things change, a hundred years is a long  
13 time.

14 Why has the NCAA existed for a hundred  
15 years? What has kept it going? You know, it's fun to  
16 think about how it originated. It originated in 1906  
17 because at that time football was being played, and, well,  
18 that was very dangerous to student athletes. For example,  
19 one of the formations that was used was called the flying  
20 wedge.

21 And the way that worked, Josh, is that the  
22 offensive team would lock arms, about 15 or 20 yards  
23 behind the line of scrimmage, form a V. And they put the  
24 ball carrier in the middle of that V, and they come full  
25 speed ahead, raring down at the line of scrimmage.

1                   Well, it turned out the only way you could  
2 stop that formation was to take a defensive player, sort  
3 of roll them up in a ball and throw them at the formation  
4 coming your way. And as a result, many people were hurt.  
5 Of course, you've got to remember that the equipment was  
6 practically negligible then.

7                   So in that year, in 1906, we had 18 deaths  
8 and about 150 serious injuries in far fewer games than we  
9 play right now. The country was outraged and wanted the  
10 government to stop the practice of football on college  
11 practices.

12                  Theodore Roosevelt, then President, said  
13 that, you know, he liked football. He was an outdoors man  
14 and a man who looked towards athletic events as an  
15 important part of one's life. So he called together all  
16 the powerhouses from the major universities at the time,  
17 those that played football at the very highest levels --  
18 you know, Harvard and Yale and Columbia and New York  
19 University. And he brought them all together, including  
20 Palmer Pierce from the military academy. And he said,  
21 you've got to get this under -- in better shape so that  
22 people aren't getting hurt or killed.

23                  That was the birth of the NCAA, namely to  
24 be a national organization that makes rules for the safety  
25 of the students who play, but also runs championships and

1 makes sure it's, so to speak, a level playing field, that  
2 it's fair.

3 Competition has been expanded well past  
4 football to many other sports, as well, 23 sports in  
5 total. But the need for having a national oversight body  
6 to make sure that it's done safely and fairly and with  
7 integrity, and those who participate are students has not  
8 gone away, and it won't go away in the future either.  
9 That's why the NCAA is here.

10 JOSH: You've often said that  
11 intercollegiate athletics is an integral part of the  
12 mission of higher education. How has that remained the  
13 same? And how has that evolved over the past hundred  
14 years?

15 DR. MYLES BRAND: Most people don't know  
16 the history of college sports through the last hundred  
17 years. So for example, in the 1920s and the 1930s, we had  
18 people who played for colleges who really weren't  
19 students, who were paid by the game, and they would switch  
20 allegiances between games and wouldn't play if the money  
21 wasn't high enough. And you know, you couldn't tell the  
22 difference between professional sports and college sports.

23 But what's evolved, particularly in the  
24 last few decades, is that college sports are played by  
25 college students. I emphasize the word "students". Those

1 are people in our colleges and universities who are  
2 engaged in the regular curriculum, with the goal towards  
3 getting a degree, and participating in college sports. A  
4 handful of them will do this as a vocation, will have an  
5 opportunity to play professional.

6 But there's 360,000 student athletes and  
7 only a small number of them go professional. All the  
8 others are going pro in something other than sports. And  
9 as a result, I think they are students, and being students  
10 and students first means that they have to be part of the  
11 educational activity on campus. And the university has as  
12 part of its mission to educate all its students, including  
13 student athletes.

14 JOSH: As we've said, a hundred years is a  
15 really long time. Does the NCAA have anything special  
16 planned throughout the entire year?

17 DR. MYLES BRAND: Well, each of our  
18 championships -- and that's 88 championships -- will have  
19 something planned at each one of them. We're going to  
20 celebrate student athletes this year -- their successes  
21 and the great contests in which they participate. So we  
22 will continue to celebrate what we started in our  
23 convention and do it for the entire year. But the key  
24 point here is that this is the year of the student  
25 athlete.

1                   JOSH: Where do you think the NCAA will be  
2 in the next hundred years?

3                   DR. MYLES BRAND: Things change a great  
4 deal. And it's very hard to predict a few years at a  
5 time, let alone a hundred years. But as I mentioned  
6 earlier, there will always be a need for a national body,  
7 which is the NCAA, to make sure there's a level playing  
8 field; that the competitions are fair; that the student  
9 athletes have an opportunity to get a legitimate, honest  
10 education at their home institutions, at the colleges and  
11 universities; and who oversee the championships, such as  
12 the Men's Final Four and the Women's Final Four in  
13 basketball.

14                  JOSH: Dr. Brand, thank you so much for  
15 taking the time again and providing some insight on the  
16 history of the association.

17                  DR. MYLES BRAND: Thank you.  
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