

3-13-2006 Selections for Basketball Championships

1 (File: 20060313_Myles_Brand_selections22m16.)

2 JOSH CENTOR: In my opinion, there isn't a
3 more exciting period of the year than NCAA tournament
4 time, when the men's and women's basketball seasons
5 culminate with the road to the Final Four.

6 My name is Josh Centor. And today I'm with
7 NCAA president Myles Brand, to discuss the NCAA
8 basketball tournaments.

9 Dr. Brand, how is everything this morning?

10 DR. MYLES BRAND: We're doing great, Josh.

11 JOSH CENTOR: Yesterday was selection
12 Sunday, and tonight is selection Monday for the women's
13 tournament. What can we expect out of the 2006
14 tournaments?

15 DR. MYLES BRAND: You're going to get
16 exceptional tournaments. I think we have another batch
17 of great teams. Last year's tournaments were really
18 outstanding, and we think this year's will be even
19 better.

20 This is the most exciting time of year from
21 my perspective too. I mean, it is the peak.

22 JOSH CENTOR: I can hardly decide what's
23 for dinner every night. It's a difficult decision in my
24 house. One thing I can't ever get my hand on is how the
25 committees make their decisions to put which teams in and

1 which teams out.

2 DR. MYLES BRAND: Those are tough
3 decisions. Both the men's and women's committees have
4 approximately 10 people on them. We literally lock them
5 in a hotel room -- not the same room -- on different
6 floors. We lock them in hotel rooms for a week. They
7 have all the data, RPI information. I mean, we're
8 providing them online with every game each team played,
9 what the score was, what the opponents were doing. I
10 mean, we have a ton of data.

11 Of course, a number of teams have automatic
12 qualifying, AQ, if they win their tournament in their
13 conference. This committee then catches literally
14 hundreds, maybe thousands of games before they get locked
15 up, so that they are just overwhelmed with this
16 information. And then they work it out. They rank those
17 teams.

18 In detail, these are very knowledgeable
19 people -- former basketball coaches, athletic directors,
20 conference commissioners -- they rank those teams. They
21 don't have any say about any team in their own
22 conference, but teams in the other conferences. And they
23 do about as good a job as you can.

24 It's not a formula -- this is really
25 important -- it's not a formula that you get a certain

1 amount for what this computer says or that RPI rating
2 says. These are subjective judgments by the best
3 informed people in this business.

4 JOSH CENTOR: I couldn't do it. I have all
5 the respect in the world for the people that sit in those
6 rooms. It's incredibly difficult decisions.

7 What makes this tournament so exciting? Is
8 it the one-and-done formula? Is that what makes it so
9 exciting?

10 DR. MYLES BRAND: I think that makes it
11 exciting. The Cinderella teams -- you know you never
12 could tell who is going to win -- a West Virginia or
13 Bucknell. I mean, last year, great performances. Some
14 of the first seed teams give way early on. I think the
15 one-and-done tournament.

16 But you know what I really think it is, I
17 think it's the absolute excitement and commitment of the
18 student athletes. I think they are so excited to be
19 playing on national television for this championship,
20 where every game is televised -- and not only locally in
21 their own conference, but nationally, everyone is
22 watching them. I mean, I think the excitement that the
23 student athletes have for it is what makes the tournament
24 great.

25 JOSH CENTOR: Can other sports emulate what

1 men's and women's basketball has done?

2 DR. MYLES BRAND: You know, other sports
3 are exciting too. They don't get as much TV time and as
4 much visibility.

5 But, you know, take the College World
6 Series in Omaha. Boy, is that exciting. And you know
7 that the student athletes there are very excited to be in
8 Omaha as well. Women's softball has been absolutely
9 incredible. You know, the last football games we saw,
10 the last Rose Bowl was absolutely incredible. I think,
11 again, it's all because of the student athletes'
12 performance and their level of excitement for the games.

13 JOSH CENTOR: And you mentioned the Rose
14 Bowl, do you think that people will get as excited about
15 that and the BCS Bowls because it's not done in a
16 tournament format?

17 DR. MYLES BRAND: Well, you know, there's a
18 lot of difference of opinion of that, and I know the
19 media wants us to move towards a tournament.

20 The presidents of the universities in
21 Division I-A are the decision makers here. And they've
22 decided they want to really emphasize the regular season
23 games, and they didn't want to turn this into an NFL-type
24 playoff situation.

25 There is probably something intermediate

1 between an NFL playoff situation and the current system.
2 And over time, that may change. Right now they have a
3 FOX contract to broadcast the games for about four or six
4 more years, and it's not likely much will change when
5 that's over. When it's over, they might move towards a
6 modest tournament situation is or they might not. But
7 right now the presidents have made the decision they
8 don't want to do that.

9 JOSH CENTOR: Last year I had the pleasure
10 of sitting in with the Boston College women's basketball
11 team as their fate was announced and hope that they have
12 some good fate tonight. Women's basketball clearly moved
13 its selection show to Monday.

14 What does that say about the game of
15 women's basketball, getting its own night there?

16 DR. MYLES BRAND: Yeah. I think that's an
17 important statement. It shows the evolution and maturity
18 of the women's game. I mean, the men's game was getting
19 all the attention on the Sunday night release of
20 information. And you know, then the women were -- I
21 wouldn't say an afterthought -- but they weren't getting
22 the due attention that the quality of that sport now
23 deserves.

24 So by moving them to Monday, I think we can
25 put the spotlight appropriately on the women's game in

1 that tournament, where we haven't done that as much
2 before. You know, ESPN gets a lot of credit for this.
3 And they were arguing that we really need to put more
4 visibility on the women's game. And I couldn't agree
5 more. The women's game is growing by leaps and bounds,
6 it is really one of our growth sports.

7 JOSH CENTOR: What makes it so different
8 and unique from the men's game? It's not the same game.

9 DR. MYLES BRAND: It's not the same game,
10 you're right. They play as hard, and it's as rough. But
11 it's a different game. A little more finesse, actually,
12 a little better shooting.

13 JOSH CENTOR: I agree.

14 DR. MYLES BRAND: They are very athletic.
15 But they don't necessarily play above the rim the same
16 way the men's do. And there's one really critical
17 difference. You know, if you -- the women's game
18 actually is more team basketball. I mean, you can watch
19 the zones develop. You can see the play in a way that
20 the men's game, which is a faster game, is harder for the
21 fans to see.

22 So I think actually, in many ways the
23 women's game is more enjoyable because you can see it
24 develop -- the plays develop on the court better.

25 JOSH CENTOR: I think it's a great game too

1 because you can go with your kids, younger kids, and
2 explain the game as you see it happening, as well.

3 DR. MYLES BRAND: Well, I think that's
4 right. I think women's basketball is a fan friendly --
5 family friendly game. We see a lot of retirees and young
6 kids in the game. So there are avid fans. Let me assure
7 you, there are avid fans for the women's game. But it
8 also has a much broader appeal, I think, than the men's
9 game, at this point.

10 JOSH CENTOR: We're seeing a women's game
11 during the regular season now on television on a nightly
12 basis. How popular can women's basketball get?

13 DR. MYLES BRAND: Oh, I think women's
14 basketball is just beginning to create visibility and
15 popularity. I think it has a long ways to go. There's a
16 great -- I should say there's great upside, that hasn't
17 been realized. It's far more popular now than it was 5
18 years ago or 10 years ago. We see that in the number of
19 fans going to the games and the interest of television
20 media. We -- you know, the sellouts on a dome in Final
21 Four. I mean, all that we see as evidence. But I think
22 the women's game has an enormous upside.

23 JOSH CENTOR: I think the parity in --
24 among the teams in Division I, especially, has really
25 seemed to help the game. What do you think about that?

1 DR. MYLES BRAND: In the women's game?

2 JOSH CENTOR: Yeah.

3 DR. MYLES BRAND: Yeah, I think so, but I
4 don't think we're all the way there. I think you're
5 right. It's more than a dozen teams now, maybe it's
6 three dozen teams. But I don't think we have the level
7 of parity we need in the women's game. I think that is a
8 goal we have to accomplish so that we will have actually
9 more women's games, as they're seeded all the way down at
10 64. I mean, all those teams, I think will be as good --
11 will be better in the future. But I think parity is an
12 issue with the women's games that we really have to work
13 on.

14 JOSH CENTOR: There are a lot of games
15 between the two tournaments. Do you get to take any of
16 them in?

17 DR. MYLES BRAND: Oh, yes. I take in as
18 many as I can. I'm a big basketball fan. And you know,
19 I'm a little bleary-eyed by the end, but it couldn't be
20 more fun.

21 JOSH CENTOR: Well, I'm looking forward to
22 seeing the women's bracket released tonight. Thank you
23 for joining us on "Mondays With Myles". "Mondays With
24 Myles" can be found on the NCAA blog, the DoubleAZone
25 each Monday morning. If you'd like to subscribe you can

1 find it on our podcast on iTunes.

2 Dr. Brand, thanks again.

3 DR. MYLES BRAND: Pleasure, Josh.

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