

1 (File: 20060320_Myles_Brand_storming22m16.)

2 JOSH CENTOR: Over the years I've been to a
3 lot of great sporting events, but none of them quite
4 measure up to the excitement of being in Harvard City and
5 when the Crimson defeated Yale in the game in the fall of
6 2002. I went into the game as a neutral fan and left a
7 huge Harvard fan, storming the field with the rest of the
8 students in the stadium after the victory. I probably
9 shouldn't have done that. My parents wouldn't have been
10 too proud.

11 On today's edition of "Mondays With Myles",
12 NCAA president Myles Brand and I will discuss crowd
13 control at NCAA events and why it's so important.

14 Dr. Brand, thank you for being here.

15 DR. MYLES BRAND: Well, it's good to be
16 here, Josh.

17 JOSH CENTOR: So why is crowd control so
18 important? Why shouldn't I have stormed the field with
19 the rest of the Harvard faithful?

20 DR. MYLES BRAND: You know, it's perfectly
21 understandable to storm the field. It's great excitement
22 and exuberance, and particularly when if team you're
23 rooting for wins or if you're an alumnae or a student in
24 that school. I mean, it's perfectly understandable. But
25 it's unsafe. That's the problem.

1 It wasn't long ago that we had -- I believe
2 it was in Division II, a young man was killed in football
3 when they stormed the field and the goal post fell on
4 him.

5 I think the safety issue is critical. We
6 have many students hurt each year, some seriously. That
7 death was not unique.

8 In terms of basketball, we've had a person
9 suffocate underneath the pile and die. I mean, that's
10 rather tragic. And so while I understand the exuberance,
11 I think safety issues have to play a role here.

12 JOSH CENTOR: How do you stop it? Because
13 as you know, I worked in the athletic department of
14 Boston College last year, and they had a big win over
15 Syracuse toward the end of the season. And I saw
16 security get around the court as the game was coming to a
17 close, and they were -- they formed a line around the
18 court. And there was nothing in the world they could
19 have done to stop the crowd from coming on the. They
20 tried everything.

21 DR. MYLES BRAND: You know, it's
22 interesting. In professional sports, actually, they do
23 stop that from occurring.

24 And I think it's a matter of expectation,
25 more than anything else. I'm disappointed, frankly, in

1 the way the media treats this topic. I've heard media
2 reports that say, What's wrong with those students? They
3 haven't stormed the court? I think we have to stop that
4 kind of encouragement and expectation that you'll storm
5 the court, and again, risk the health and well being of
6 some students. So we've got to change the expectations.

7 I think it's okay to be exuberant. It's
8 okay to cheer loudly. It's okay to party afterwards, as
9 long as it's done safely.

10 JOSH CENTOR: So how do you change that
11 expectation? For the students and the fan that see the
12 victory of a lifetime, how do you change them from
13 storming the court?

14 DR. MYLES BRAND: Well, I think this is a
15 question of leadership. I expect coaches, athletic
16 directors, presidents of the universities, student
17 leaders, even members of the team to make the point prior
18 to the game that we certainly appreciate your support and
19 we couldn't be happier at how pleased you are when we
20 win, but let's think of safety first.

21 And so I think leadership has to play a
22 role, and leadership comes at all levels and in all sizes
23 and shapes. So we need to have everyone who understands
24 the safety factors get involved.

25 JOSH CENTOR: But it's not the safety for

1 the people in the stands that are storming the field and
2 the court, but safety for the student athletes as well,
3 isn't it?

4 DR. MYLES BRAND: That's an excellent
5 point. And most especially safety for the opposing
6 teams. Sometimes in their exuberance, students will
7 storm the court, in basketball, for example, and will
8 physically harm these players who may have other games to
9 play and will be taken out of the action because of it.

10 I know it's fun; but it's not fair. It's
11 not fair to those who get hurt; certainly not fair to the
12 families of those who lose a son or daughter as a result.

13 JOSH CENTOR: It's a bit of a sportsmanship
14 issue too.

15 DR. MYLES BRAND: It's a sportsmanship
16 issue and it's a cultural issue. I think it's about
17 sportsmanship, but it's also a cultural issue about what
18 kind of behaviors we expect of each other and what we
19 expect in terms of respect for each other in terms of
20 their well being.

21 So be exuberant, enjoy the games,
22 particularly with the Final Four coming up. But let's be
23 careful about people's safety.

24 JOSH CENTOR: Is this something that has
25 come about more recently because of certain events?

1 DR. MYLES BRAND: I think we're getting
2 into the habit of doing it. Again, it's the expectation
3 issue. And the media and others who want to see that
4 exuberance played out, it makes for great television.
5 And they never come back and show the cameras on someone
6 who is kicked and has a broken bone, or a player who will
7 miss a game because of this, or in the worst cases when
8 somebody gets seriously injured or even there's a demise
9 of a student or two. They'll come back and then complain
10 about it.

11 I think we've seen some copycat activity
12 here that frankly I should like to see stopped.

13 JOSH CENTOR: Okay. Well, with the Final
14 Four coming up, this is certainly an important discussion
15 to be had.

16 DR. MYLES BRAND: It is. And you know, in
17 the Final Four, we've been very good in terms of that
18 kind of safety issue at our games. It mostly isn't one
19 group of students from one school that are dominating the
20 seats, and so it's not likely we are going to have that
21 happen. So we've been pretty good about making sure it
22 doesn't happen in our tournament games, and we will
23 continue to do that. But the fact of the matter is it
24 should be true all yearlong.

25 JOSH CENTOR: All right. Well, thank you,

1 so much for helping some of these issues to light.

2 DR. MYLES BRAND: You bet.

3 JOSH CENTOR: "Mondays With Myles" can be found on the
4 NCAA blog, the DoubleAZone each and every Monday morning.

5 And you'd like to subscribe, you can find our pod casts
6 on iTunes. Thanks for joining us.

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