

9-25-2006 Eligibility After Transferring

1 (File: 20060925mwm.)

2 JOSH CENTOR: Good morning. And welcome to  
3 "Mondays With Myles".

4 I'm fortunate to be sitting here with NCAA  
5 president Myles Brand. How are things today, Dr. Brand?

6 DR. MYLES BRAND: Good. Good morning,  
7 Josh.

8 JOSH CENTOR: Good morning. I want to  
9 discuss a fairly controversial topic with you this  
10 morning.

11 At its meeting in April, the Division I  
12 board of directors made the decision to allow graduates  
13 with remaining eligibility to be immediately eligible  
14 after transferring to a new institution. The board  
15 upheld its decision this August, and it will appear  
16 before the Division I membership for a final vote at the  
17 NCAA Convention in January.

18 What are your thoughts on this?

19 DR. MYLES BRAND: I think it's an  
20 interesting idea. I'm not sure we have enough data at  
21 this point to know whether it will work or not.

22 On the positive side, someone who has  
23 graduated with some eligibility left usually means that  
24 they've graduated within the five-year window, maybe a  
25 four-year window and still have some eligibility left.

1 They've been injured or took a redshirt or some such.  
2 They should be free to transfer and play for someone else  
3 in their last year.

4 Now, some of the coaches won't like it that  
5 they've trained this individual for three years, four  
6 years, and now they go somewhere else. But it does give  
7 them some opportunities.

8 On the other side of the coin is: Will it  
9 become a practice that's so prevalent that it essentially  
10 leads to free agency in the last year of eligibility?  
11 And if that happens, then we're going to have shifting of  
12 teams too much.

13 Now, I don't know that that's going to  
14 happen. We just don't have enough data at this point.

15 JOSH CENTOR: Let's look at the educational  
16 side of things for a second. You have a student athlete  
17 who, as you said, may have graduated in three, three and  
18 a half years, taking a redshirt, have a year of  
19 eligibility left. Now, they have their undergraduate  
20 degree, which is great. That's what they're aspiring  
21 for.

22 And now, they can go anywhere in the  
23 country. They can go to law school; they can go get an  
24 MBA; they can do anything at any other school.

25 Should they be restricted to go to their

1 undergraduate institution and start that graduate work?

2 DR. MYLES BRAND: Well, they would be if  
3 they wanted to play sports. They can go any place they  
4 like, but the question is will they still have  
5 eligibility left for athletics?

6 JOSH CENTOR: Right.

7 DR. MYLES BRAND: We don't want to limit  
8 their academic choices, just the athletic choices.

9 I think it depends how many students  
10 actually are going to take advantage of it. There are  
11 lots eligible for it. But how many would take advantage  
12 is not clear. We, again, don't want to create on-campus  
13 recruiting of existing student athletes. I mean, that  
14 could be a kind of quasi- or metaphorical free agency  
15 that can be very disruptive to a team.

16 So while you have to balance the choices  
17 that students want to make -- and I understand your  
18 perspective -- you also want to balance what is important  
19 for creative -- what is important for competitive equity;  
20 what's important for the coaches having a sound program.  
21 And that's a tough balance.

22 If it's one or a few students for good  
23 reasons who move, it doesn't matter. But if we hundreds  
24 of students changing colleges and universities just to  
25 play sports, then we have a problem.

1                   JOSH CENTOR: So coaches are worried about  
2 a potential free agency system. That's what I've seen.  
3 They're concerned that people will just go left and right  
4 to new programs when they have the chance not to sit out  
5 a year.

6                   DR. MYLES BRAND: Well, it's not just free  
7 agency. It's the recruiting that's involved in free  
8 agency too. And you'll have one coach somehow trying to  
9 get into another coach's program to find out which young  
10 men are going to be able to do this. And they may start  
11 a graduate program without a real intention of finishing  
12 it, but just use that kind -- kind of approach as an  
13 excuse to transfer schools.

14                   I'm not saying it's going to happen -- we  
15 need more information -- but it has the potential.

16                   JOSH CENTOR: Now, this really affects  
17 basketball, football, and men's ice hockey. Other  
18 sports, you can transfer and not sit out a year right  
19 now.

20                   DR. MYLES BRAND: That's correct. It's  
21 only for those three sports.

22                   JOSH CENTOR: Why are the rules different?

23                   DR. MYLES BRAND: I think the coaches and  
24 the athletic directors wanted to keep some stability in  
25 these programs. It was important to them, particularly

1 in football, for example, where it takes them years to  
2 actually be productive for most people. And there's a  
3 great deal of investment by the coaching staff, by the  
4 school, in each individual, and they don't want them  
5 transferring. They're not prohibiting it. There's a  
6 penalty to play, but there has to be some incentive to  
7 stay with the school you're at.

8 In fact, one sport, baseball, which you  
9 know well, does not have a transfer rule, and it's  
10 seriously considering it because we see so much  
11 transferring taking place right now that it hurts  
12 academically as well as competitively for the teams.

13 JOSH CENTOR: Well, I think this will  
14 certainly be interesting to watch in the next year or  
15 two. We've already seen some student athletes leave  
16 after they've received their undergraduate degree, and  
17 we'll have to get some more of that data.

18 We might have to revisit this in the  
19 future, and hopefully we'll be able to do that.

20 Thanks for joining me today, Dr. Brand.

21 And thanks to our listeners for choosing  
22 "Mondays With Myles". We'll see you next week.

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