

1-29-2007 Graduate Transfers

1 (File: 20070129mwm Graduate transfers)

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

4 Today Dr. Brand and I are going to talk about the
5 issue of graduate transfers, which Division I membership
6 enacted and override at the recent NCAA Convention and said
7 that graduate students, students who have received their
8 undergraduate degrees, cannot go to a new institution for a
9 year and finish their eligibility.

10 Dr. Brand, what are your thoughts on this override and
11 the issue in general?

12 DR. MYLES BRAND: It was interesting at the
13 convention, in which the democratic process was enacted, was
14 overwhelmingly against the transfers. And that was a bit of a
15 surprise.

16 The concerns on the part of the athletic directors,
17 reflecting the coaches -- especially in the football and
18 basketball coaches were speaking out about this most
19 strongly -- is that it creates free agency, that it's possible
20 thousands of youngsters over a several year period could
21 transfer after getting their degrees. And they're afraid that
22 the recruiting would begin while there were still juniors or
23 even sophomores in school, trying to attract people away from
24 teams, one team to another.

25 You know, my own view is that this is exaggerated,

1 that we only saw about 25 transfers this past year, and most
2 of them were harmless, if you like. There were a few of elite
3 athletes, but not most of them. And those that did transfer
4 did it for academic reasons, legitimate reasons. So I think
5 the fear is exaggerated. There is some merit to those
6 concerns, but probably not as much as the athletic directors
7 reflected and the coaches did as well.

8 Interestingly, we've taken a different perspective on
9 this. We have a waiver process. And what the NCAA is going
10 to do is going to look very carefully at that waiver process
11 and for any individual who has a legitimate academic reasons
12 to transfer after graduating and still have any eligibility,
13 we will grant it.

14 So we may be getting the best of both worlds, Josh,
15 that we'll stop any free agency that might be there. But also
16 anyone who as legitimate academic reasons, they're finished up
17 in four years. They redshirted or got hurt in one year and
18 they have another year of eligibility left, and they want to
19 leave because they have a better opportunity in a graduate
20 program at a different school, or their current school doesn't
21 have that graduate program. In that case, we will grant a
22 waiver and we will be quick about it.

23 So I think we might be getting the best of both
24 worlds, where we can halt the free agency, so to speak, but
25 also respect the academic concerns of the students.

1 JOSH CENTOR: Many of the coaches who spoke out about
2 the issue may very well, in fact, be some of the same coaches
3 who would leave a school because they've got a better contract
4 offer on the table from another place or from the National
5 Football League or professional league in another sport. They
6 don't need a waiver process to drop out of their contract.
7 How come our student athletes will need this?

8 DR. MYLES BRAND: Well, we treat coaches and students
9 differently, of course. Some are enrolled in degree programs;
10 coaches are employees. I think that comparison on the face
11 may sound right. But they're really very different categories
12 of people. So that's not where I would go for the answer.

13 What I'd be concerned about is that if we have student
14 athletes who really are good students and want to pursue a
15 graduate education elsewhere, but yet, enjoy playing sports,
16 we don't want to take away that opportunity from them to play
17 somewhere else, provided that the reason they're moving is not
18 for more playing time or they didn't like their coach, but
19 because of academic reasons. And as I mentioned, I believe,
20 we'll be able to react to that favorably and quickly.

21 JOSH CENTOR: Quickly, I did want to get back to that
22 democratic process you referenced. The override was enacted
23 at the Division I level. But Division II voted that this was
24 an acceptable practice. So here we have one division saying,
25 no, thank you, we're going to rely on waivers. And we have

1 another division saying, yes, this is fine for our student
2 athletes. Why the difference? Why is this acceptable?

3 DR. MYLES BRAND: Well, first of all, each -- in the
4 federated system in the NCAA each division enacts its own
5 rules and rarely do they diverge, but they did in this case.

6 I think what it speaks to is amongst the Division I
7 coaches and athletic directors a greater anxiety about having
8 a level competitive field. They look at this on a national
9 basis, and they look at the movement of student athletes,
10 elite student athletes between schools, in a very different
11 way than a Division II, which looks at it more regionally and
12 is less concerned about students transferring than is
13 Division I.

14 So I just think the anxiety level of a competitive
15 level playing field is stronger in Division I, and that's why
16 it came out the way it did.

17 JOSH CENTOR: Speaking of anxiety levels, I'm going to
18 quote from an email I received from a parent, a father of a
19 women's basketball student athlete at Brown University.

20 Michael Goldberg (phonetic) writes: This proposal dealt with
21 redshirt kids, many of whom by injury found themselves out a
22 year. Any athletes not injured or redshirted by decision, can
23 currently jump ship to another school anytime before their
24 four years are up and simply sit out a season before finishing
25 up in a new school.

1 As far as my daughter's case goes, she will finish her
2 undergraduate degree on time at Brown and will then be
3 applying elsewhere for grad school as Brown is eliminating
4 their graduate programs.

5 So this parent was concerned that his daughter might
6 not be able to play that extra year because Brown, as great as
7 an undergraduate institution is, may not have what she's
8 looking for to continue her education.

9 DR. MYLES BRAND: First of all, I think Brown's a
10 great university. It has wonderful graduate programs, maybe
11 not in his daughter's area.

12 JOSH CENTOR: Right.

13 DR. MYLES BRAND: But it's a fine institution, and
14 many people would be happy and pleased to be able to go there.

15 Having defended Brown, which I visited for a year as a
16 philosophy professor, I should tell you, I think in cases like
17 this, we really have to make sure that there's -- the young
18 woman applies for a waiver. If it is the case, as the father
19 describes it, that there's no appropriate graduate program for
20 her there but she needs to go somewhere else, we should not
21 limit her last year of eligibility and be able to take
22 advantage of it. But you have to make the case on academic
23 grounds. If you really can make that case, we will grant the
24 waiver.

25 JOSH CENTOR: Let me ask, and I know nothing about

1 this student athlete's academics or anything along those
2 lines. But you have to apply, as well, to get into graduate
3 programs. Conceivably a student athlete could be an
4 undergraduate somewhere and not be accepted into a graduate
5 program at the same institution, maybe gets accepted somewhere
6 else and has that remaining year of eligibility. Would that
7 be a time when we would enact this waiver process again?

8 DR. MYLES BRAND: Yes. I think that's a very good
9 example. We're most interested in making sure that the
10 student athletes have the academic opportunities without
11 having to give up their eligibility. So in these cases, yes,
12 we will look at that. If it's a genuine case and you got to
13 apply, you're exactly right. You do that in an honest and a
14 good faith way, and you don't get into a graduate program
15 on -- in your home institution, but you get into another
16 graduate program at another institution of the same kind, why
17 should we deprive a student of that opportunity?

18 So we will grant those waivers, and again, we will be
19 quick about it so that no one loses any time in terms of
20 entering graduate school.

21 Again, this might be the best of all possible worlds
22 in Division I, given the anxiety people have of the free
23 agency. We'll make sure that that doesn't happen and should
24 satisfy the coaches and the ADs and others who might want to
25 take advantage of the situation just for playing time and not

1 for academics, then they're stuck. They better choose their
2 original college very carefully or they're stuck.

3 But if there are genuine academic reasons, where you
4 graduated in four years and you have a year left of
5 eligibility, we will process those.

6 JOSH CENTOR: All right.

7 DR. MYLES BRAND: But they do need to apply.

8 JOSH CENTOR: Okay. Well, I will pass this along to
9 Mr. Goldberg.

10 And for all of you listeners, anytime you have a
11 question such as this or a comment, please send it our way,
12 and Dr. Brand and I will discuss it on an upcoming edition of
13 "Mondays With Myles". Dr. Brand, thank you.

14 DR. MYLES BRAND: Thanks, Josh.

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