

12-24-2007 Athletics in Perspective

1 (File: 20071224mwm)

2 JOSH CENTOR: Well, Dr. Brand, we sometimes have a run
3 down here of things that we like to talk about.

4 But today you said, let's take a gut check. Let's
5 just chat about intercollegiate athletics and how it kind of
6 fits in the landscape of the United States and the world.
7 It's not the most important thing out there.

8 DR. MYLES BRAND: We're coming to the end of a
9 calendar year and a starting of a new year. And everyone,
10 family and friends and you, yourself, all like to come
11 together and think about resolutions, how we're going to
12 change things in the future. But it also gives us a chance to
13 sit back a little bit and reflect on what's important, what's
14 meaningful.

15 I think intercollegiate athletics is critically
16 important to our culture, it has been for some time, and is
17 increasingly so. But it's not the most important thing in the
18 world.

19 I mean, when we think about the fact that the United
20 States has young men and women overseas protecting our
21 democracy and fighting and risking their lives; when we think
22 of the fact that people in New Orleans are still struggling
23 with a hurricane that struck some time ago and have not yet
24 fought their way through it; when we think of people who are
25 suffering with incurable diseases and putting up the good

1 fight, it makes you put everything in perspective.

2 Athletics is important, but it's not the most
3 important things in life. And while we enjoy it, it's
4 entertainment, and even more so for me people, the fact of the
5 matter is we do have to understand how it fits into our
6 overall lives. There are more important things.

7 JOSH CENTOR: And the holiday season is obviously a
8 great time to sit back and reflect. And we look at around the
9 world, and there are people who are hungry and who are cold
10 and don't have places to live.

11 So a question I have for is if it takes a dollar or
12 two, and we see the infomercials, we know how you can feed
13 somebody who is hungry, why is it okay for us to be spending
14 millions upon millions of dollars at some of our institutions
15 on intercollegiate athletics?

16 DR. MYLES BRAND: Well, it's part of the commercialism
17 that makes up the United States. It's capitalism. It's the
18 way money goes around. People spend on entertainment and
19 other reasons and that creates jobs and opportunities for
20 others, so that's not bad.

21 However, I think we should also at this time of
22 year -- and I agree with you -- step back and think about
23 those who are less fortunate.

24 It doesn't take a lot of money to help people. It
25 doesn't take a lot of money to put it in the U.N. World Food

1 Programme to help people starving in Africa, young children,
2 most especially. There are opportunities that we can help
3 people with just a little bit of funding that we can put in
4 there. This is the time of year to think about it.

5 Either you help in personal service; you help in terms
6 of volunteer action, which is important; you can help in terms
7 of dollars; you could just say a kind word to someone.

8 JOSH CENTOR: But it's okay for fans to spend the
9 money on their apparel and on tickets to sporting events. But
10 we're just putting things in check here, is that where you're
11 going?

12 DR. MYLES BRAND: Oh, absolutely. I mean, I think
13 it's -- there's -- it's perfectly acceptable for people to
14 make decisions in how they spend the money that they earn. If
15 they want to spend it for sports, entertainment, for tickets,
16 that's fine. There's nothing wrong with that.

17 But there are also some other alternatives that they
18 may want to think about, especially this time of year. Put
19 money in a scholarship fund for some student who is not an
20 athlete, do that through your local college or university.
21 Help others.

22 There's no reason why we cannot both enjoy ourselves
23 in terms of sports, but also be reflective and of assistance
24 to others who need it.

25 JOSH CENTOR: Sounds good. Dr. Brand, thanks for the

1 holiday thoughts.

2 DR. MYLES BRAND: You bet.

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