

7-23-2007 Sports & Timing

1 (File: 20070723mwm)

2 JOSH CENTOR: Dr. Brand, it is Monday. It's about 85
3 degrees in Indianapolis, a great day to play some tennis,
4 maybe some baseball. How come our colleges and universities
5 aren't playing sports right now?

6 DR. MYLES BRAND: Well, some people are playing
7 sports. The question is are they playing intercollegiate
8 athletics right now? The answer is no.

9 Why? Why not do that? It is a beautiful time of day
10 out here in sunny Indianapolis. But, you know, it's a really
11 interesting question you asked, Josh.

12 Suppose for the sake of argument that universities
13 began to have year-round programs, that the summer semester
14 was equivalent to the other two semesters. And some people
15 would go 12 months a year, and some would go two semesters.

16 In fact, I remember my first teaching job was at the
17 University of Pittsburgh, and we were on, at that time,
18 something called trimesters. And faculty members and students
19 were able to pick two out of any three they wanted to do.
20 Well, that never worked out, and we went back to the normal
21 calendar.

22 And I think the real answer to the question is if it
23 was a real semester, if the universities themselves moved to
24 full 12-month programs, then there's nothing wrong with having
25 intercollegiate athletics during the summer because it would

1 be a genuine academic experience. But the vast majority of
2 schools don't do that now, and so there's not a place in the
3 academic calendar for it.

4 JOSH CENTOR: Is it possible that this could happen?

5 DR. MYLES BRAND: I suppose it's possible. I could
6 imagine some universities doing it, to better utilize their
7 space and their personnel. But you'd have to have all the
8 universities in a division or all the universities in the NCAA
9 move in that direction. And if they were to do that
10 independently for academic reasons, then there's nothing wrong
11 with having summer sports, intercollegiate athletics during
12 summer. But the fact of the matter is they don't. It's not
13 true. And until they do, we won't have intercollegiate
14 athletics during the summer.

15 JOSH CENTOR: Yeah. You make a really good point.
16 Obviously, we can't move semesters and the months of the
17 academic year for intercollegiate athletic scheduling
18 purposes.

19 But I can't help thinking that moving the baseball
20 season, moving the softball season a couple months later into
21 these warm weather months would be a significant difference
22 for, you know, your climate bias, if you will.

23 We always see the teams in the South and the West
24 dominating baseball and softball. Boston College, University
25 of New Hampshire, we might see some more dominant baseball and

1 softball programs, some more equity out there.

2 DR. MYLES BRAND: Oh, I think all that's true. And
3 that would be a feature if there were summer intercollegiate
4 athletics officially. But, of course, you don't want
5 intercollegiate athletics to be the tail wagging the dog.

6 The key question is what is the academic calendar?
7 What are the institutions doing academically? And then you
8 work in -- integrate athletics into that calendar and into the
9 way the institution operates, not the other way around.

10 JOSH CENTOR: Let's talk a little bit about the
11 popularity of NCAA sports. College basketball is clearly --
12 men's college basketball is clearly our most popular sport.
13 In the summer months, there really isn't that much
14 competition. There's a lot of baseball going on, but we're in
15 the offseason for professional basketball, for the National
16 Hockey League, and for professional football.

17 Would there be more of a market for some of our
18 Olympic sports if they were competing in the summer months?

19 DR. MYLES BRAND: Yes. I think that's another case
20 which would be better for sports in the summer.
21 Unfortunately, the fact is the academic calendar does not now
22 reflect it. We're not going to have the tail wagging the dog.
23 First, you're going to have to have the academic calendar for
24 academic reasons move into a 12-month period. And when that
25 occurs, then I think we will have sports there.

1 Now, it's an interesting fact, Why don't we take off
2 the winter when it's cold and go to school during summer? And
3 the reason is historically, school did not take place, whether
4 it's high school, elementary school, or college, during the
5 summer so that you can help out on the farm.

6 Well, we're not in the 19th century anymore, and most
7 of us live in urban areas. Working on the farm is not the
8 case, but we've lived with that calendar. In fact, by and
9 large, it's a worldwide calendar.

10 JOSH CENTOR: All right. Well, it could happen,
11 ladies and gentlemen. I don't think it's going to happen
12 anytime soon, but always a fun conversation.

13 Dr. Brand, thanks so much.

14 DR. MYLES BRAND: Good to talk to you, Josh.

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