

7-30-2007 NCAA & Football Leagues

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2 JOSH CENTOR: Welcome to "Mondays With Myles".

3 There's no question that everybody's getting excited
4 football season is around the corner. But, Dr. Brand, what if
5 we had football, a version of college football, in the spring
6 and in the summer months?

7 The All-American Football League is proposing that
8 this could happen on some of our campuses. What do you think?

9 DR. MYLES BRAND: Well, it's a fascinating idea. But
10 I should correct you, I don't think it's a version of college
11 football. It's professional football. Intercollegiate
12 athletics, including football, is not for professionals.
13 These are young men who have already put in four years of
14 college or more and have graduated. And as I understand, the
15 proposal is that it is graduates from the institutions that
16 would people these teams.

17 And, you know, I think certainly, in many parts of
18 country, football is followed greatly. And when the football
19 season is over shortly into the winter, I think people go into
20 a funk really that they wish it would continue.

21 And there have been a number of attempts -- arena
22 football is one -- but there have been a number of attempts to
23 extend the football year, and this is another one.

24 It tends to take advantage of the fact that those who
25 will be playing in the games having a prior association with

1 their universities, they will be playing in that same stadium.
2 And so it might arouse some of the same feelings and
3 particularly the feelings they had for certain players who
4 maybe didn't make the NFL or who wanted to play, not just
5 arena football, but play in this low-level pro league.

6 So it has some opportunities, but I think we need to
7 understand that many of these leagues have failed in the past.

8 JOSH CENTOR: Well, you're certainly right. First of
9 all, this is not a collegiate model. The athletes will be
10 paid. The proposal is to pay them, but they will have that
11 affiliation with the university and would be required to be
12 graduates.

13 My question is will this product be different than the
14 NFL Europe, which just folded? Will it be different than some
15 of these other leagues because there is an association, a
16 proposed association, with universities?

17 DR. MYLES BRAND: Well, that proposed association is
18 weaker than I think you describe it because some team at some
19 university might not have a number of X players, and they can
20 get them from all over the country. They would prefer to get
21 them locally so they have that a fan base built in, but they
22 could come from anywhere.

23 It's not the college game; it's a low-level
24 professional game. And there may well be an audience for
25 that, but let's be clear, it's not the college game.

1 I think -- and here's a danger, frankly, if we push
2 too hard on the fact that you have to be a graduate, or a vast
3 majority of the members of the team have to be graduates from
4 a certain university and you can't find enough, then there
5 might be a desire to reach down into the undergraduate body
6 and pull out some of those players in order to play in
7 professional sports. And that, in fact, could hurt the
8 college game if we move in that direction.

9 Those who are putting together this league have
10 assured me that that's not their intention and certainly
11 that's not where they're going to start. But there's always
12 that danger that it will bleed into the real college game
13 because this is not the college game despite being played in
14 college stadiums.

15 JOSH CENTOR: But if they stick to the plan, is it
16 infringing on the college product or potentially enhancing it?

17 DR. MYLES BRAND: That's a good question. I think it
18 remains to be seen, and I think the people who are working
19 hard to advocate and start this league would answer it's going
20 to enhance it. You'll be able to get the fan base interested
21 all year long. And that may happen.

22 It may happen too that it's more difficult than they
23 think to generate this fan base, and they're going to try and
24 find players who perhaps have a greater association with the
25 school -- in fact, maybe players now -- and hence begin to try

1 and make gray the area between the professional and the
2 collegiate model. If that happens, then I think it's a bad
3 thing.

4 So there is a threat. That's not where they're
5 starting clearly, but there's always that threat.

6 JOSH CENTOR: The NCAA does not need to support this,
7 but I'm sure the AAFL would appreciate the NCAA's support. Do
8 you support this?

9 DR. MYLES BRAND: This is totally independent of the
10 NCAA. This has nothing to do with college players. I mean,
11 what's happening is that former college players in a league
12 that's renting the stadiums, maybe licensing the colors, are
13 playing professional football. We don't get involved in the
14 NCAA in professional football. That's not part of what we do.

15 JOSH CENTOR: But our schools could be making some
16 money for renting out the stadiums.

17 DR. MYLES BRAND: Oh, sure. And they could rent it
18 out for rock concerts and all sorts of things, but we don't
19 get involved in that either.

20 JOSH CENTOR: Right. Well, this will be an
21 interesting one to watch. We'll see if this satellite
22 professional league will work.

23 Dr. Brand, thanks.

24 DR. MYLES BRAND: My pleasure.

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