

9-17-2007 Winning & Losing

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

3 Well, I'm excited for an interesting conversation this
4 morning, Dr. Brand. Winning and losing. Let's talk about it.
5 What's more important?

6 DR. MYLES BRAND: Oh, I prefer winning.

7 JOSH CENTOR: I think we all do.

8 DR. MYLES BRAND: And that's why you play the game.
9 If you're not out there to win and compete as hard as you can,
10 go do something else.

11 JOSH CENTOR: But how important is it to win? Is that
12 the end all and be all in intercollegiate athletics?

13 DR. MYLES BRAND: You know, I'm a little old fashioned
14 about that, more traditionalist. It's how you win that counts
15 a lot. We talk about coaches as mentors and teachers. What
16 they're teaching to the young people in their charge is
17 absolutely critically important.

18 I go around all the time, and you've heard me more
19 than once, probably more often than you'd like, talk about the
20 values that are communicated through sports, seeking
21 excellence, persistence, hard work, team work. All those
22 values that are very positive. Life skill values that are
23 very positive as participating in intercollegiate athletics.
24 If you don't teach those by doing things in the right way in
25 the team effort, then I think you're doing a disservice. In

1 fact, I'd go so far as to say, you're acting immorally.

2 JOSH CENTOR: But can't you get those aspects you just
3 identified, even if you lose? Can't you go about it the right
4 way, if you lose? The old adage says: It's not whether you
5 win or lose, it's how you play the game.

6 So you're talking about how you play the game, but
7 does the outcome truly matter?

8 DR. MYLES BRAND: The outcome does matter. So it's --
9 I'm not in favor of the old adage. This is somewhat a
10 different position. I think winning is important. Coaches
11 get fired for not winning; coaches get hired in order to win.
12 All that's true. That's the real world.

13 But it still matters what you teach the young people
14 on the field, how you conduct yourself. Coaches always talk
15 about doing it the right way. I don't want it to be just
16 rhetoric. I want them actually to do it the right way.

17 JOSH CENTOR: We've seen kind of a transition here
18 where academics has never -- academic success has never been
19 more important to our athletics programs, to our individual
20 teams as it is today. And that's true to your academic reform
21 initiatives.

22 Is it more important to win to get those Ws than it is
23 to graduate your players? What's the proper mix here?

24 DR. MYLES BRAND: That's a false dichotomy, Josh. I
25 think you have to do both. To be successful as a coach and to

1 be successful as a student athlete, you have to succeed
2 academically or the team members have to succeed academically,
3 and you have to win. It's not one or the other. Don't try
4 and weigh one against the other.

5 A successful coach is someone whose team actually does
6 well academically and athletically. And a student athlete is
7 someone who does well on the field, but also walks away with
8 an education. So it's not one or the other, you have to do
9 both.

10 JOSH CENTOR: Should coaches be given a free pass to
11 get whoever they want on to their rosters if they hit those
12 minimum requirements? Because if winning is so fundamentally
13 important, than if a kid meets minimum standards, should they
14 be able to go to any institution in the country?

15 DR. MYLES BRAND: The NCAA sets absolute minimum
16 standards. It's sort of like institutional accreditation.
17 They're the business minimum standards. No one should recruit
18 any individual to an athletic program on any campus, unless
19 that individual, with proper support -- and that's an
20 important point -- with proper support can graduate from that
21 institution. You don't do anyone a favor -- the longevity of
22 the program or most especially the student athlete -- by
23 putting them in a situation in which they can't succeed.
24 Setting them up for failure is not to answer. To use and
25 exploit them for a year on the field, and let them flunk out

1 because they're not capable of doing the academic work at that
2 institution is irresponsible.

3 So the fact of the matter is they may come in with a
4 lower GPA or SAT than the rest of the student body. But with
5 appropriate academic support, they should be able to graduate
6 and succeed. You can't bring someone in that, even if you
7 give them the best academic support, they still cannot succeed
8 in that institution. I consider that exploitation.

9 JOSH CENTOR: Many contracts are structured so that
10 the number of wins you have are rewarded. There are
11 incentives for winning, for reaching Bowl games in football,
12 for reaching the NCAA tournament in college basketball. I
13 personally think that there should be more incentives to have
14 your student athletes succeed academically. I know some
15 contracts are structured that way.

16 If teaching matters, why aren't more contracts
17 structured that way?

18 DR. MYLES BRAND: That's a very good question. We're
19 starting to see more contracts structured that way, and the
20 presidents in particular are pushing for that. It's not a
21 majority yet, but that is a trend we're starting to see. The
22 response that some coaches and others have given to that, and
23 say, Well, I'm expected to graduate my student athletes, so I
24 shouldn't be rewarded for that -- well, the fact of the
25 matter, they're expected to win too. And they expect to be

1 rewarded for winning, so why wouldn't you also be rewarded for
2 succeeding academically for your student athletes, as well?

3 I think we'll probably see more of that. I don't
4 think we're in the trend yet, where it'll become a majority in
5 the next few years. But more and more people are
6 understanding that since that's an important value, namely
7 academic success, that coaches should be rewarded for it as
8 well as academic success.

9 JOSH CENTOR: Do you think that it's more important
10 for programs at the Division I level to win than at the
11 Division II or III level? Or is this just something that's
12 important for all teams in all divisions?

13 DR. MYLES BRAND: All teams, all divisions, every
14 sport, men and women -- winning is part of the game. If
15 you're not interested in winning and competing to the best of
16 your ability, then I suggest you do something else.

17 The differences between Division I, II, and III
18 student athletes, frankly, is often genetic -- your size, your
19 speed, things that you can't affect on the way you were born.
20 That's the big difference. But in terms of the desire to win,
21 I would hope and expect and believe that it's the same in all
22 three divisions.

23 When you go to a Division II or Division III game,
24 those student athletes are playing their hearts out. They're
25 playing the best they possibly can. They're not playing any

1 harder, given their abilities, then the players in Division I.
2 So I think it's true of all divisions.

3 I also think it's true in all divisions that how you
4 play the game in order to win becomes critically important and
5 how the coach teaches what the values of the game or so that
6 they'll carry over in life is critically important.

7 I also think we have to be careful about
8 overemphasizing the coaches' role. How the game is played is
9 also affected by the context of the school in which you
10 undertake it, the fan base. I mean, you can't think of
11 athletics as free standing and separate. It is a reflection
12 of the society in which it operates, and, of course, reflects
13 on the society in which it operates.

14 So the point is that I think we have to expect the
15 institution and all who work at the institution, from the
16 president on down, as well as the AD and the coach, to
17 emphasize the values of participating in athletics as positive
18 moral values.

19 JOSH CENTOR: All right. A very interesting
20 conversation, folks. And thanks for tuning into "Mondays With
21 Myles".

22 Thank you, Dr. Brand.

23 DR. MYLES BRAND: Pleasure.

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