

1-14-2008 NCAA National Convention

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2 JOSH CENTOR: Well, Dr. Brand, I don't know if you
3 know this, but this is the 5th state we have recorded "Mondays
4 With Myles" in.

5 Of course, we are in Nashville, Tennessee, at the 2008
6 NCAA convention. And just like we did last year in Orlando,
7 we are going to talk about your State of the Association
8 Address, which was delivered on Saturday. Give me some of the
9 key messages that you tried to get across.

10 DR. MYLES BRAND: The theme for the entire convention
11 is that the NCAA is a higher education association, and the
12 speech actually was directed towards that. It tried to help
13 people understand the details of what that means.

14 What are the roles of intercollegiate athletics on
15 campus, in particular? And what kinds of advantages do they
16 provide? But also what kinds of challenges?

17 JOSH CENTOR: Well, you hit on it a couple of times --
18 the educational value of athletics.

19 DR. MYLES BRAND: That's the primary role that
20 intercollegiate athletics plays on campus. It has educational
21 value primarily for the student athletes, but, frankly, for
22 all the students as well. It involves learning, not
23 necessarily, of course, learning chemistry and physics and
24 philosophy. But it involves the kind of learning that takes
25 place within a college education.

1 You know, it's not what happens in the laboratory and
2 the library. It's not about writing papers or taking tests.
3 But it's about how do you learn to persist through obstacles?
4 How do you learn to work in teams? How do you learn to work
5 together with people that you don't know, who aren't like you?
6 And how do you consistently persist towards excellence? And
7 all of those are skills, frankly, you learn on the field and
8 the court.

9 JOSH CENTOR: Are we not doing a good enough job of
10 putting the academic piece and the athletics piece together at
11 this point?

12 DR. MYLES BRAND: I think there's a real tendency by
13 student-athletes, by athletic program members, as well as the
14 general public and the media to separate them, to pull them
15 apart. We purposely use the words student-athletes, with a
16 hyphen in between, even though not everyone likes that term.
17 The fact of the matter is that term adequately represents
18 these individuals. They are students and they are athletes,
19 and we need to put them together. But not everyone
20 understands that, and sometimes purposely tries to pull them
21 apart.

22 JOSH CENTOR: Going to class, going to practice, going
23 to games -- it is not easy. You referenced in your address
24 that this is quite different from the professional model --
25 this collegiate model of sports.

1 DR. MYLES BRAND: Well, if you're a professional
2 athlete, you're interested in winning. That's all that
3 counts. Now, even a professional athlete wants to win in the
4 right way, but that's your total interest. You're hired to
5 win and you're playing to win, period. That's your life.

6 A student-athlete is different. A student-athlete has
7 multiple obligations, including academic success, getting a
8 degree, as well as participating in sports -- balancing those
9 athletic goals with academic goals as well. These are very
10 important and more difficult tasks to do. So that
11 differentiates the collegiate model, which involves students
12 who are also athletes, with a professional model where we are
13 just dealing with athletes.

14 JOSH CENTOR: You discussed academic reform. And we
15 are at a new place with APR. And you said some teams aren't
16 going to hit that benchmark. Where are we with that?

17 DR. MYLES BRAND: Well, actually we're in a better
18 place than we were before, but not exactly where we want to
19 be.

20 In the past year, for example, I thought we were
21 heading down a pathway which would penalize many teams,
22 particularly in the sports of football and basketball.
23 Progress has been made, and that's good. I think there'll
24 still be some teams penalized, probably more than we want, but
25 I think we are starting to see some understanding within

1 athletic programs, and particularly on teams, of what's
2 necessary to happen. I think our student-athletes are
3 responding very well, in addition.

4 So we will see some teams penalized, particularly in
5 the spring, when we have four years of data and we remove the
6 margin of error, squad size adjustment. But it won't be
7 nearly as many as we thought it might be.

8 JOSH CENTOR: You also discussed the importance of
9 community on campus, and you lauded Division II for its
10 community engagement initiative. Can we discuss a little bit
11 about that initiative, and what you hope the entire
12 association takes from it?

13 DR. MYLES BRAND: Well, I think intercollegiate
14 athletics actually has a role to play in creating community
15 both on and off campus. And Division II, as it began it's
16 strategic positioning statement, understood that very well.
17 So they're asking their student-athletes more and more to be
18 involved, engaged in the community -- whether that's service
19 learning, it's reaching out, it's the Make-a-Wish Foundation
20 that the student-athletes who are involved in, it's Habitat
21 for Humanity. But mostly it's pride in connecting the campus
22 with the community and that's terrific.

23 Now, of course, there is on-campus community too that
24 student-athletes, not just in Division II, but the other
25 divisions as well, work very hard to achieve and are benefited

1 by it.

2 JOSH CENTOR: You discussed the importance of reaching
3 student-athletes earlier -- prospective student-athletes
4 earlier in the process. That kind of goes hand in hand with
5 the community engagement, doesn't it?

6 DR. MYLES BRAND: It does to a great extent, and
7 that's an important point. I was thinking, primarily, though
8 certainly not exclusively, of young basketball players.

9 What we are seeing in the sport of basketball, in
10 particular, is that young men aren't preparing well enough to
11 go to college while they are in high school or even before.
12 You have to prepare for college when you are in the 8th and
13 9th grade, at least be thinking about it and know what kinds
14 of courses you have to take and get the right attitudes in
15 terms of studying and academic preparation.

16 And I think we just have to do a better job of
17 reaching out to these young men, particularly in basketball,
18 but also in football and baseball and other sports, to make
19 sure that while they're in high school, particularly the first
20 years in high school, they know what's expected of them, not
21 just athletically, but also academically.

22 JOSH CENTOR: Final question. State of the
23 Association 2008, what is it?

24 DR. MYLES BRAND: Oh, I think we are doing extremely
25 well. And I feel good about the fact we are doing better and

1 better each year. But we are not doing perfectly, because the
2 issues and the challenges that are part of the intercollegiate
3 athletics aren't those that you saw once and for all. Just
4 the opposite, they come back time and again in new guises or
5 new issues and challenges arise.

6 So while we are doing better and better in solving our
7 problems and making progress, whether it is academic reform or
8 better competition, we'll continue to face challenges in the
9 future. And what's important about intercollegiate athletics
10 is how we address those challenges.

11 Can we do it as a group that has pride in who they are
12 and what they want to accomplish and they understand well what
13 the goals are? Once that happens, I think we can meet all the
14 challenges in the future.

15 JOSH CENTOR: Thank you, Dr. Brand.

16 DR. MYLES BRAND: My pleasure.

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